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EDITORIAL

MEMO TO DUKAKIS

Michael Dukakis has less than eight weeks to reorient his flagging campaign, summon his energies and project his vision—and win the election. Of course, he could stay his course and win on a fluke, a Bush boo-boo or the off chance that he will be counted the lesser of two mediocrities. But to mobilize a majority of the electorate for substantial political change, he might consider, for starters, three suggestions:

1. Build on those first intimations of class consciousness you expressed on Labor Day in Detroit. Most American families are stuck at fifteen-year-old real wage levels, while the Reagan rich are getting greedier. Spell that out and say what you will do to equalize the distribution of profits from the hell-for-leather U.S. economy; the formulaic "good jobs at good wages" isn't good enough.

2. Expand the pool of eligible voters while there's still a little time left (it's slipping away fast). Throw some of the millions Bob Farmer raised for you toward Jesse Jackson's people in the South and in the urban centers and ask them, respectfully, to register as many Democrats as they can before the rolls close. Do the same with active, savvy issue groups (peace, labor rank and file, feminists, environmentalists). Forget about boring and self-protective local pols who fear an expanded electorate and are now running your campaign in several states.

3. Offer Americans a Good Deal: comprehensive health care, quality education, meaningful work, elderly and children's services, a healthy environment, affordable housing, social equality, tolerance and growth. And when they ask you who will pay for it, tell them the people who *ought* to pay will pay. End of discussion.

DAN QUAYLE, ACID FREAK?
Alexander Cockburn

PERESTROIKA & SOCIALIST EQUALITY
Daniel Singer

THE FEDS VS. OBSCENITY
Robert Corn-Revere

ALGER HISS: LITERATURE VS. HISTORY
Michael Rogin

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROBERT MAPPLETHORPE
Arthur C. Danto

SOCIAL DISSERVICES

WHY WELFARE REFORM IS A SHAM

MIMI ABRAMOVITZ

Congress is about to enact legislation that turns the controversial Aid to Families with Dependent Children program on its head. The changes made in this program, which was designed to help needy single mothers stay home with their children, represents a sharp break with the philosophy of the landmark Social Security Act of 1935, of which A.F.D.C. is a part. The new law transforms A.F.D.C. from an income-support program into a mandatory work and training program and shifts social welfare responsibility from the Federal government to families and the states. Billed as a way to strengthen family life, this "welfare reform" will in fact cheapen the costs of women's labor and weaken the basic principles on which the modern welfare state rests. This, in turn, is best understood as part of a broader conservative strategy, initiated more gingerly in the mid-1970s, to redistribute income upward and reduce the size of the Federal government.

The new welfare program meshes well with current conservative thought. It claims to be forging a new social contract that spells out the reciprocal responsibilities between A.F.D.C. mothers and the state. In exchange for a parental agreement to become self-sufficient there will be a societal commitment to provide some of the means for self-support. Translated into practical terms: Women on welfare with children over age 3 (or 1 in some states) will be required to participate in work and training programs, and the state will more vigorously collect child-support payments from absent fathers. In return, the government will also help women on A.F.D.C.

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EXCHANGE.

NOT SELLING THE FRANCHISE

Princeton, N.J.

In "Mixing Polls and Propaganda" in your May 7 issue William Bollinger and Daniel M. Lund assert that polls conducted in Central America on behalf of the U.S. Information Agency are Gallup polls. They are not. The CID (Consultoría Interdisciplinaria en Desarrollo) surveys by Carlos Denton are not Gallup surveys. The article reports that the "new leaders of Gallup have franchised the Gallup reputation to local market research firms." This is completely incorrect. Gallup has not franchised its name to Denton or any other overseas organization. As a company, we did not certify Denton's work for the U.S.I.A. nor do we certify his organization. He is an affiliate of Gallup International Research Institutes (GIRI), an international cooperative research association that the Gallup Organization neither owns nor controls.

As a prerequisite of admission to GIRI, Denton has passed certain minimum standards of practice as judged by the GIRI secretariat. GIRI is headquartered in London. Norman Webb is director but the chief executive of GIRI is Jan Stapel of NIPO in Amsterdam. I might add that GIRI is not a new organization designed to turn a buck on the Gallup reputation. It was founded in 1947 by Dr. George Gallup with the explicit purpose of encouraging multinational research. Gallup has never owned or controlled any of the companies affiliated with GIRI.

In practical terms GIRI membership means that at minimum, other GIRI affiliates can rely on the organization to carry out assignments for multinational projects. These are mostly market research projects.

Gallup is in no position to judge the quality of Denton's work for the U.S.I.A. On the other hand, we have no reason to endorse the criticisms of Bollinger and Lund. We deplore the fact that the Gallup name has been involved in this controversy. When we first became aware of the surveys, through the White House's release, we contacted Denton to be sure that the surveys were not being billed by him as Gallup surveys. He showed us the reports and we were satisfied that he was not labeling the surveys as Gallup polls. (His company is called CID but he mentions in his promotional material that he is the GIRI affiliate in Costa Rica.) The U.S. government played up the Gallup connection to give the survey greater credibility. For all their fervor and righteousness, Bollinger and Lund bought the untrue premise that this was a Gallup survey.

Gallup does not have a financial interest or any research control over any company in Latin America. From time to time we will work in these countries on behalf of our American clients. In those cases, we determine the survey method and are prepared to back up the findings. Not in this case. The Gallup Organization Inc. subscribes to the standards of disclosure and professional ethics of the American Association for Public Opinion Research (A.A.P.O.R.), the National Council on Public Polls (N.C.P.P.) and CASRO. Any survey conducted or disseminated by Gallup adheres to the ethical principles of these organizations. *Andrew Kohut*
President
The Gallup Organization Inc.

DOMESTIC SQUABBLE

London

In your May 7 issue William Bollinger and Daniel M. Lund's treatment of opinion polls commissioned by the U.S.I.A. in Central America and carried out by CID, a member of Gallup International in good standing, left the reader with the impression that Gallup International, the U.S.I.A. and the U.S. Administration were all involved in some conspiracy to deceive the American people about what was going on in that troubled part of the world. In contrast to this they appear to swallow as gospel truth the activities of a Central American university-sponsored organization with less than two years' experience and clearly using dubious practices, as if they were the U.S. cavalry coming to the rescue of the bewildered homesteaders of America.

Bollinger and Lund's article demonstrates that they have violated the basic rule of scholarship (they are historians) by not going back to original sources, and also the basic rules of journalism by failing to distinguish between facts, comment, secondary reporting and sheer rumor. They are also willing to attribute the basest motives to actions that do not fit in with their views of the world.

Let me demonstrate this by examining their claim, which they regard as a knockout punch, that CID provided misleading research on the recent elections in El Salvador. Bollinger and Lund talked about a "recent" CID Gallup poll showing a healthy lead for the Christian Democrats over their major rivals, the Arena party. This was true, if by "recent" we mean September 1987, six months before the election, the date of the only poll Bollinger and Lund had access to when they wrote their misleading article. In a more recent poll, conducted about two weeks before the election, CID reported a 75 percent growth in Arena support since the previous survey and a big shift toward the right, bringing Arena to within a point of the Christian Democrats. Arena went on to win the election by a substantial margin, not inconsistent with the trend CID reported as of two weeks before. The authors did not know these results, but that didn't stop them from giving a totally wrong impression of CID's work and quoting the remarks of a Christian Democrat politician made in the heat of an electoral campaign, which just isn't evidence.

Bollinger and Lund made their wild assertions, including that Gallup's reputation was tarnished, without even knowing the result of the election in terms of popular votes, as Bollinger stated to me personally.

The relationship between CID and the Gallup Organization in Princeton, both affiliates in good standing of Gallup International, is totally misrepresented in the article. Gallup Princeton is the parent organization only in a special sense, in that it was the company that Dr. Gallup founded from which spread out inspiration for the founding of other companies, first of all in places like Britain, Australia, Canada, the Netherlands and France, and then to a total of forty countries around the world. At least twenty years ago the sheer size of our group dictated a change. Gallup International is now an association registered in Zurich, with its secretariat (myself) in London. All affiliates remain members of this association provided they are commercially sound, are managed by people acceptable to the group and subscribe to an international code of ethics and of professional conduct. American Gallup is a member, like anyone else, with added prestige due to its own importance in the democratic processes of one of the largest democracies in the world and as the source of the present worldwide network. When approached at one point by journalists seeking results of CID polling in Central America, American Gallup did not hide behind the autonomy of its affiliate, it simply confessed its inability to comment in any expert or informed way. They cannot keep tabs on all other members.

Now we come to the charge that Carlos Denton of CID hid behind the proprietary and classified nature of the U.S.I.A. data. Certainly he did. The vast majority of research contracts carried out by the vast majority of acknowledged professionals in our field are private. They stay that way unless by mutual agreeement they are released. The U.S.I.A. is an important and respected client of Carlos Denton in Costa Rica, though nowhere near as important as major U.S. and local manufacturers of consumer goods throughout the region. I have examined U.S.I.A. material relating to specifications and reports in Costa Rica and find them basically the same in style, content and requirements in professional terms as I have experienced myself. In Britain when working with them I found that they were meticulous, expert buyers, usually concentrating on question material that was clearly relevant to the needs of the United States, ending in projects I found both sensible and satisfying. Some fringe clients, usually from a single-issue pressure group, try unsuccessfully to commission research questions leading to "favorable" results, and the U.S.I.A. is certainly not one of them, though Bollinger and

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EDITORIALS.

Poland's Hope

As talks between Solidarity leader Lech Walesa and the Polish government continued in Warsaw, neither side was flushed with optimism. Walesa had spent days persuading strikers to abandon the defiance and, yes, solidarity that were their main weapons against a government they bitterly distrust. For his part, Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski called off the police, his chief answer in the past to workers' demands. Up until now, he has been riding from victory to victory toward disaster. Again and again the regime had broken the resistance of the workers only to discover that Poland's sick economy had grown worse and the political situation more explosive. Realizing that another of his famous victories could bring the country to the brink of chaos, Jaruzelski opted for the future and agreed to the talks. They began symbolically on the eighth anniversary of the Gdansk agreement, which won the right of independent representation for the Polish labor movement.

The strike that spread from the mines of Silesia to the steelworks of Stalowa Wola and the shipyards of Szczecin and Gdansk lacked the sweep and drama of its historical predecessor eight years ago. Nor did it have the same mood of exhilaration. This movement is a pretty grim one, led by workers from the rising desperate generation squeezed by spiraling prices and falling wages. Faced with these angry young men, the authorities seem to have grasped that scoring points would prove valueless. For the economic reforms indispensable for Poland to stand a chance of recovery, the regime needs the backing of the country's labor

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movement. If the preliminary talks between Walesa and the government grow into a real dialogue, Poland could once again set a precedent for workers throughout Eastern Europe.

"And to the King absolute power, if he carries our will." The famous German saying could serve as a motto for the central myth of the Soviet world: The working class is the undisputed master, provided it toes the party line. Even in the era of *perestroika*, there can be no question of immediate transfer of power from the party to the workers. What can be envisaged, however, is a creeping transformation, recognizing that it is the right of the workers to have their own independent representation and, thereby, a share in the shaping of their own and their country's affairs. At a minimum, this would mean a legalization of Solidarity, freedom of political association and a social compact between government, labor and the church that will end the festering conflict between the regime and the people. This is the path that the shipyard workers of Gdansk pioneered with the agreement of August 1980. This is what is on the historical agenda in Warsaw today. After nearly seven years of darkness, a ray of hope.

Broken Trust

President Lazarus Salii stepped into a Palauan hospital on a September night a year ago to ask who it was that had been shot. Bedor Bins, came the answer, and soon he would be dead. Salii turned and walked away, disappointed no doubt by the news that it was not Bins's son, Roman Bedor, a passionate opponent of Salii and recent target of death threats. Bins had been checking Roman's office when the attack occurred. There were no lights that night—Salii having ordered the power cut throughout the country as an austerity measure—no phone communication, no ambulance service, no police dispatch. Yet there was Salii, inquiring who had been hurt.

Now Salii is dead, shot at his desk on the afternoon of August 20 while his wife, driver and maid ate lunch on the front lawn not far away. Palauans may disagree over whether the shooting was assassination or suicide (the official explanation), but it doesn't much matter. "The compact" killed Salii, just as it had Roman Bedor's father.

Palau, 500 miles east of the Philippines, is the United States' last trust territory; the Compact of Free Association, a grotesquely misnamed plan by which Palau would call itself independent but consign itself to colonialism. Salii had been groomed as a U.S. asset since the 1960s and was in every way a creature of the compact, having gained office in tainted elections following the assassination, still unsolved, of President Haruo Remeliik. For years Salii had pushed the compact, despite its disastrous consequences for Palau and its conflict with the country's Constitution, the world's first to outlaw nuclear weapons and nuclear energy in any form and for any purpose.

Under the terms of the compact, negotiated in 1982 by Fred Zeder, a good friend of George Bush, Palau would grant the United States a fifty-year lease on about one-third of the country's total land mass, control over defense and foreign policy, substantial sea rights (intended primarily to deny access to Soviet ships) and veto power over all Palauan actions. In return Palau would get $428 million over fifteen years, thus perpetuating the economic bondage that has characterized its relationship with the United States since 1947. Palau's economy, once based on self-sustaining agricultural production, is now a paradigm of dependency, with the national budget supplied almost entirely by the United States, supermarket shelves lined with American imports and 40 percent of all paid workers employed in the Civil Service.

Obstructing passage of the compact is Palau's Constitution and the antinuclear activists, most prominently women, who fight to defend it. Aside from being an affront to U.S. strategic power in the Pacific, the antinuclear provision would thwart any military plans the United States may have for Palau. Back in March, Adm. William Crowe, head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, admitted to Congress what Palauans have long feared: that their country would be "one of the first or priority areas that we would have to look at" if American forces were expelled from the Philippines. Not surprisingly, the U.S. government has been pressuring Palau's people to renounce their Constitution, forcing them to vote on it or the compact nine times in as many years, spending enormous amounts of money in the process and, aided by Salii, losing by a smaller margin each time.

Salii died a traitor to his people, a servant of imperial power who used his control of the electrical supply, the Civil Service, the radio and the press against them. During his tenure, Palau became a fearful place, where terror tried to accomplish what electioneering and bribery could not. Thus the killing of Bedor Bins, the firebombing of his daughter's house, the numerous threats and acts of violence against other anti-compact activists.

But of late Salii had become a liability. His corrupt administration and personal involvement in a power plant scandal that has bankrupted the country had prompted the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee to send a G.A.O. team to Palau. That team returned to say it had found more suggestions of foul dealing than it had time to examine. At the time of Salii's death the committee was insisting on a second G.A.O. inquiry and a special prosecutor's investigation as conditions for moving forward with the compact, conditions that had been strenuously opposed by Salii. Now that Salii is out of the way and his interim successor, Thomas Remengesau, has welcomed such an investigation, the United States will almost certainly press for another vote on the compact. Such an action would only add to the disgrace of Palau's history as a U.S. trust territory. Fundamentally the compact is rotten. The only decent course of action is for Congress to insist on its renegotiation in accordance with Palau's nonnuclear Constitution, consistently endorsed by its people, and with the principles of self-determination.

JoAnn Wypijewski

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Usual Suspects

On July 20, while the Democrats politely argued about whether even to discuss the future of the Palestinians in the Middle East, the F.B.I. arrested one Arab-American and seven resident aliens—six Libyans and one Moroccan—charging them with what *The New York Times* called "pro-Libya actions." The press, which got advance notice of the arrests, trumpeted an unsubstantiated allegation that two of the men had plotted to kill Oliver North. This wild claim is not even among the charges against the men, and neither the F.B.I. nor U.S. Attorney Henry Hudson have provided any proof of it, saying that such evidence is a matter of national security. The accusation did, however, create the "threat" necessary to justify the arrests of the eight men and their subsequent detainment without bond.

As the actual charges against them make clear, the only threat the men pose is to the way Americans think about Libya and the way that thinking translates into policy. The charges involve violations of the U.S. ban on commerce with Libya, imposed in 1986 at the height of anti-Qaddafi hysteria. They include the use of funds from the People's Committee for Libyan Students to bring American journalists, teachers and clergy to Libya to see firsthand the effects of the U.S. bombing of Tripoli and Benghazi and to provide transportation for non-Libyans demonstrating against the U.S. raid. The men are also cited for paying the travel expenses of American activists who attended a conference in Libya and for purchasing T-shirts bearing the picture of Qaddafi's infant daughter, who was killed in the U.S. attack.

The arrests invite comparison to the case of the seven Palestinians and one Kenyan picked up last year in Los Angeles on the pretext of terrorist activity [see editorial, "The Untouchables," March 21, 1987]. The Immigration and Naturalization Service tried to deport the eight based on nothing more than some literature they had carried and distributed. Although that case was thrown out, the I.N.S. has not given up, and today the L.A. Eight are again threatened with deportation on the same trumped up charges.

These two incidents are only the latest examples of what amounts to a government campaign to harass Arabs and Iranians in this country, whether they are citizens or aliens. Consider Operation Boulder, in which the F.B.I. spied on Arab-American activists in the 1970s; the Libyan hit-squad hoax of 1981, crucial to the Administration's program of redirecting public concern from human rights to "terrorism"; and, most frightening, an I.N.S. contingency plan, leaked in 1987, that envisioned the internment of thousands of Arab and Iranian aliens and Arab-American naturalized citizens in a Louisiana camp. The recent Congressional committee action on the McCarran-Walter Act—substituting "terrorist" for "Communist" as a category for exclusion and labeling as terrorist any alien who is an "officer, official representative, or spokesman of the Palestine Liberation Organization"—reflects the same institutional paranoia and similarly makes ethnicity the basis for repression.

Such U.S. police actions against Arabs and Iranians constitute the domestic counterpart to a foreign policy that has routinely victimized these groups abroad. And though all Arabs in America do not actively oppose these twin policies, they are all injured by the racism that sustains the policies. While the U.S. news media have smeared Arabs abroad as hijackers and killers and have made cultural demons of Qaddafi and Khomeini, movies like the 1985 *Under Siege*—which portrayed the Arab community in Dearborn, Michigan, as a band of Moslem fanatics conspiring to blow up the Capitol—have inflamed racist fears in this country. It's no wonder that in a word-association quiz not long ago every one of forty high-school students asked by the Detroit coordinator of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee said that "terrorist" was the first thing that came to mind when they heard the word "Arab."

In such a climate of suspicion, civil rights tend to erode, and in this case Arab-American citizens and aliens who are politically active have become particularly vulnerable. The police actions against them, which would otherwise be considered obviously wrong, meet with little public outrage. The July arrest of the eight "Libyans," as they were so often identified, seems almost natural. It is that naturalness, horrifying in its implications, that underscores the need for equal rights and justice for Arabs in America and for Arab-Americans.

KARIMA BENNOUNE

STAFF NOTES

With our next issue executive editor Richard Lingeman will begin a six-month leave of absence, during which he promises faithfully to complete, at last, the second volume of his biography of Theodore Dreiser. The first volume was published by G.P. Putnam's Sons in 1986.

Replacing him is Richard Pollak, who is not an unfamiliar face in these precincts. A few years back, he sat in for Elizabeth Pochoda as literary editor. Pollak was the founding editor of *[MORE]*, a still-remembered media gadfly published in the 1970s, and is a contributor to numerous magazines, including this one. His most recent book is *The Episode*, a novel (New American Library/Signet).

Elsa Dixler, another returnee, had been on maternity leave (welcome to planet Earth, Rosa Schneider, born April 20) and will switch from associate editor to the newly created post of director of Nation Books, which will publish titles based on or inspired by material from the magazine. She will also serve as a contributing editor.

We welcome back Pollak and Dixler and wish Lingeman a productive sabbatical.

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BEAT THE DEVIL.

Dan Quayle, Acid Freak?

Under the influence of his family's political passions and vast fortune, George Bush's running mate may have enjoyed other influences as well. While pursuing his amazingly undistinguished intellectual career at Indiana's DePauw University, young Quayle had lodgings at the Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity house. In the fall of 1968 the Deke house was, in the words of Milwaukee's weekly alternative newspaper, *Shepherd Express*, "unleashed to party without a house mother for the first time and sponsored a frat party known as 'The Trip.' According to a caption above Quayle's photograph in the *Mirage*, the DePauw annual yearbook, 'The Trip' was 'a colorful psychedelic journey into the wild sights and sounds produced by LSD.'"

So maybe Quayle, who berates some of his coevals for escaping from the Vietnam War across the Canadian border, did share with them another escape through the doors of perception. *Shepherd Express* quotes a former college mate of Quayle, now living in Milwaukee, as saying, "LSD was not served directly by the fraternity, but it most certainly would have been taken by the members."

At least we have Quayle to thank for fostering class as a political theme in the campaign. On the matter of class and war, for some time now I've been carrying around an article sent me by Maury Maverick of San Antonio, Texas. He's a former Texas legislator, son of a former mayor of San Antonio and a columnist in the San Antonio *Express-News*, owned by Rupert Murdoch.

Maverick presents demographic facts on the 220 Marines killed in the Beirut bombing of October 23, 1983. He could not get statistics on the twenty-one soldiers and sailors attached to the Marines there. Maverick sought the data, remembering, as he explained to his readers, that "while representing conscientious objectors to the Vietnam War, I found that the underprivileged suffered way out of proportion to their numbers."

Finally, after three years, from outgoing Secretary of the Navy James Webb, Maverick got what he was after. The racial breakdown of the Beirut dead was: white, 166; black, 47; Hispanic, 7. By religion the breakdown was: Catholic, 78; Baptist, 64; no preference, 32; Methodist, 16; Protestant, 13; Lutheran, 6; with Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Pentecostals, Moslems, Church of Christ adherents, agnostics, and members of the Bretheren and Holiness churches being counted in units of two or one. "What is it with you Catholics and Baptists," Maverick asked, "that you would let the swells do your sons this way?"

Hordes Without Number

I was invited on Ted Koppel's *Nightline* shortly before Labor Day to engage in a brisk moot on the topic of the U.S. press and its coverage of the Third World. The premise was that while the press poked around in the entrails of Dan Quayle's service in the National Guard, people were dying by the thousands in Burundi, governments were toppling in Burma, more thousands were dying in Ethiopia and these travails were barely covered by the networks.

No need here to go into the reasons, which all know: racism, inability of U.S. reporters to deal with African or Asian death in units of less than 50,000 or so, cold war blinkers, agenda set in Washington, etc. etc. We tossed these points up and down on our horns, but one notion somehow survived without serious challenge ("Dr. Marx, you have thirty seconds to sum up your view of political economy." "Herr Koppel—" "I'm sorry, Dr. Marx, we're completely out of time"): namely, that U.S. newspapers, now often known as the "print press," do a better job than TV in keeping an eye on the world.

In fact newspapers pay almost no attention to the rest of the world, apart from items in the *National Geographic* idiom ("In a bustling world Bhutan shuns change"), until given a briefing by the State Department. Take Burundi, now in the news by dint of tribal massacres. Western journalists love tribal massacres, since they suggest ur-bestiality on the part of blacks. You don't usually see much zeal to investigate economic, class or imperial factors.

Same way at home you don't see initiative to ask why, when the strike rate goes down, the murder rate goes up. According to *Midnight Notes #9* (available from Box 204, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130), if we distinguish two major American postwar eras—1947-73, when the average weekly wage rose 2.3 percent a year on average, and 1974-87, when the average weekly wage fell 1 percent a year on average—and then calculate the average percentage of estimated work-time in "days idle" because of work stoppages involving 1,000 or more workers per year in each period, we get .17 percent for the earlier period and .08 percent in the later one. Roughly speaking this constitutes a 53 percent drop in workers' militancy. There's a correlated rise in drug abuse and murder, which is now the fourth-ranked cause of death in the United States, after heart attack, cancer and accidents. Capitalism obviously prefers murders to strikes. Most murders are committed by the poor against the poor anyway. It's like a Phillips curve, written in blood.

Me Bwana, and You?

On the subject of how the U.S. press approaches the world, a review of coverage by *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal* in a few cases provides an uplifting guide.

Burundi: Checking through *The Times* from 1980 to 1986, the last year for which indexes were available, we find the following puny offerings: 1980, 4 stories; 1981, 0; 1982, 1, on a visit by François Mitterrand (another way for Third World countries to receive attention is to arrange a visit by a First World head of state); 1983, 0; 1984, 3; 1985, 0; 1986, 0. So that's six citations in seven years. There will probably be about thirty this year as a result of the tribal fighting between the Hutu and the Tutsi, equal to the total number of stories on Burundi *The Times* has done in the last century.

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The Journal was worse: 1980, 0; 1981, 2; 1982, 2; 1983, 0; 1984, 0; 1985, 0; 1986, 0; 1987, 1, breaking a four-year slump. That story, incidentally, was about a coup. Total: five citations in eight years.

Burma: Another big story this year, particularly with deaths mounting into the thousands; here is the *Times* record: 1980, 12 citations; 1981, 9; 1982, 0; 1983, a hefty 34. Twenty-eight of those were about a bomb that killed some high-ranking South Korean government officials. The key suspect was North Korean, making this a story on Red Terror, always high on the priority list. 1984, back down to 3; 1985, 7; 1986, 3.

As for *The Journal*: 1980, 3; 1981, 4; 1982, 2; 1983, 6 (here too the focus is the bomb attack); 1984, 2 (a fire in Mandalay kills ten, 23,000 homes destroyed); 1985, 3; 1986, 3; 1987, 2, one of them on a plane crash that killed forty-nine, including fourteen Americans.

Afghanistan: This is an especially amusing case. The figures are from 1973 to 1980 and then from 1985 to 1987 (1986 for *The Times*).

In 1973, *The Journal* ran three stories. That year, the height of détente, found the Soviet threat at an ebb in terms of government and media concern. One of those stories, written by Peter Kann (now a Dow Jones executive vice president) and appearing on the front page for December 27, is particularly interesting. Imagine it running in any major U.S. newspaper in early 1980.

The story is headlined, "Do the Russians Covet Afghanistan? If So, It's Hard to Figure Why." The subhead states, "From Close Up, the Country Lacks Significance—Plus Water, Industry, Schools." It discusses the coup of August 23, 1973, when Mohammed Daud's forces overthrew the monarchy. Kann notes that Daud has certain "pro-Soviet" proclivities, and says there is great concern in some quarters: "Great-power strategists tend to think of Afghanistan as a kind of fulcrum upon which the world balance of power tips. Domino theorists tend to view Afghanistan in terms of its topple effect on Iran or Pakistan."

But, Kann writes, "from close up, Afghanistan tends to look less like a fulcrum or a domino or a stepping-stone than like a vast expanse of desert waste with a few fly-ridden bazaars, a fair number of feuding tribes and a lot of miserably poor people. A visitor perhaps may be excused for wondering why the Russians, or anyone else for that matter, would particularly want Afghanistan." *The Journal*'s editorial page writers apparently agreed, as they sounded no warnings that year that the West must prepare itself for the potential loss of this vital strategic chokepoint (a far cry from the editorial that followed the Soviet invasion, which came a millimeter short of a call for war).

The next year, 1974, *The Journal* ran nothing on Afghanistan, and returning to our review, we find: 1975, 2 (on loans from the I.M.F. and the World Bank); 1976, 6 (one on the "peaceful beauty of country's aura-laden valley of Bamiyan"); 1977, 2 ("tribesmen resist" push toward twentieth century); 1978, 7 (three on the coup that year); 1979, 15; 1980, about 130, focusing on the Soviet menace. Afghanistan continues to be a major story in *The Journal*, though it has fallen from its 1980 peak: 1985, 38 citations; 1986, 42; 1987, 56.

As for *The Times* on Afghanistan: 1973, about 25 stories, primarily on the overthrow of the monarchy; 1974, 7 (five on Henry Kissinger's visit to the region); 1975, 5; 1976, 5; 1977, 5 (one on "life among nomads, which has not changed in two millennia"); 1978, 35, another big spasm, mostly on the coup, with no coverage at all until April 28, after the coup took place; 1979, 2½ full pages in the index; 1980, 17½ full pages; 1985, 1½ pages; 1986, almost 2 full pages. By a sophisticated computer method I have calculated that, at the rate it's going, *Times* all-time coverage of Burundi will reach the seventeen-and-a-half-page mark (set by Afghanistan in 1980) on July 23 in the year 12656.

The Passing Show

• *Glasnost* is making Boris awfully saucy. An item by Nikolai Smirnov in *Moscow News* for August 14-21 is piously headed "We Didn't Save Our Colleague!" and discusses the constant fears of *New York Times* Moscow correspondent Philip Taubman, who thought he was under surveillance. "He was frightened by tan Zhiguli cars, men in black raincoats, crackling noises in his receiver. . . . The persecution mania grew into a family illness: Philip was even more nervous because his wife Felicity, seven-year-old Michael and three-year-old Gregory trembled every time they saw a tan Zhiguli."

Taubman wrote a piece for *The New York Times Magazine* called "The KGB and Me." Five months ago, Smirnov writes, a Tass news analyst suggested the establishment of a Soviet Committee for the Protection of an American Colleague. "If we had heeded this humane call in April, we wouldn't be tearing our hair this August. . . . We failed to save colleague Taubman! On July 21, customs officials at Sheremetyevo Airport examined the baggage of Mrs. Taubman . . . and discovered 19 items constituting contraband. Gold and silver, an antiquarian clock, and two icons all assessed by an expert as items prohibited for export without prior permission from the USSR Ministry of Culture. There were indeed grounds for fretting and looking over one's shoulder. We failed to protect Philip Taubman."

• Each new book by Richard Nixon is greeted with respectful huzzahs by the better element. In reviewing a recent one, *1999* (subtitled *Victory Without War*), no one seems to have noticed Nixon's offhand treatment of reality in at least one instance. Counseling Presidents of the future, he says at one point, "Do not go to an unprepared 'quickie' summit meeting," adding that "at the quickie summit in Glassboro in 1968, Johnson achieved nothing, except to help the world forget the recent brutal Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia."

This sounds like sage advice based on a thoughtful reading of history until you remember that the invasion of Czechoslovakia came in August 1968, a year after Johnson shook hands with Premier Kosygin at Glassboro in June 1967.

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BELTWAY BANDITS.

DAVID CORN AND JEFFERSON MORLEY

■ Democrats Go Soft

With all the talk about Michael Dukakis being weak on defense, you would think it unlikely that military contractors want to give him any aid or comfort. Yet several military firms made "soft money" contributions to the Democratic Party, according to a recently released list. Soft money is a major loophole in campaign financing laws. Although officially intended for party-building activity, it is subject to no limitations or disclosure requirements and is indeed used in presidential electioneering.

General Electric, General Dynamics, McDonnell Douglas, Lockheed and Grumman have each given modest donations to the party—for a grand total of $11,925, far from the tens of thousands donated by certain unions ($100,000 from the Machinists) and traditional high-rollers ($100,000 from movie mogul Lew Wasserman). Still, Democratic fund-raisers call this progress. One former cup rattler notes that a few years ago it was impossible to squeeze anything out of military manufacturers for the national party. After the Democrats won back the Senate in 1986, that changed. "They're hedging their bets, cuddling up with whoever is in power," says the former fund-raiser.

Other noteworthy Democratic special-interest supporters include two pro-nuclear energy trade groups (for a total of $16,275), the American Medical Association ($31,375) and several big oil companies (including Atlantic Richfield, $35,000). One surprising donation, of $5,850, came from W.R. Grace & Company, which is chaired by Reagan's buddy J. Peter Grace. What stirs such munificence? A spokesman for Grace says it is simply good citizenship. Andrew Phillips of the pro-nuclear Coalition for Reliable Energy explains more frankly that his firm gave to the Democrats so it could get credentials to the Atlanta convention, thus gaining access to party bigwigs.

The disclosure marks the first time that the Democrats, who hope to raise nearly $50 million in soft money, have revealed the names of their contributors to this fund. But the list covers only the first $4.8 million, and the party says it will not name any further sources until after the election.

■ Bush Gets Wasted

It's a little late in the game for Bush to reclaim the traditional Republican mantle of conservation, but the Vice President, trying to emulate Theodore Roosevelt, is giving it a try. In a recent speech Bush pledged to bring a new "conservation ethic" to the White House and, in particular, to get tough with toxic waste polluters. Now hark back to March 1981. Where was George? He was head of the Task Force on Regulatory Relief, which squashed major environmental regulations in several areas—including hazardous waste disposal. Bush's move led to a halt in the E.P.A.'s enforcement of toxic waste safety standards until a court order forced the agency to return to the beat.

Nevertheless, while addressing conservationists gathered on the shores of Lake Erie, Bush vowed to bring toxic terrorists to justice. To do so would put him face to face with the G.O.P.'s national finance chair and Bush's own chief fund-raiser in the state of New Jersey, Lawrence Bathgate. Bathgate, a mega-lawyer, represents Ciba-Geigy, a notorious hazardous waste dumper. The company's dye and resin plant in Toms River, New Jersey, dumps 3 million gallons of waste water a day into the Atlantic Ocean. This waste water has tested highly positive for its potential to cause cancer, heart disease and birth defects. The plant has also spawned a Superfund site, from which hazardous chemicals have leeched into ground water. For its conduct at Toms River, Ciba-Geigy has been indicted for conspiring to defraud the state's Department of Environmental Protection, falsifying documents and dumping illegally.

When not raising money for Bush, Bathgate has been helping Ciba-Geigy in its effort to get six new permits to bring a pharmaceutical division to Toms River.

■ Career of Steele

With the Iran/*contra* scandal fading quickly from the public consciousness, it's time to play "Where are they now?" Our first contestant is James Steele. Recall that Colonel Steele, as head of the U.S. Military Group at El Salvador's Ilopango Air Base, was a critical operative in the *contra* resupply outfit run by Oliver North and Richard Secord. Steele made sure the Enterprise's planes could come and go from Ilopango. Congressional investigators have also charged that aviation fuel given to El Salvador under a U.S. military aid program that Steele managed was illegally sold to the North-Secord network. All this occurred while the Boland amendment banned military assistance to the *contras*. Defying Congress—and showing contempt for the Constitution, which he swore to defend—hasn't hindered Steele's career. Last month the Army announced that Steele had been selected for promotion to brigadier general. The less-than-law-abiding Steele is currently stationed in Nuremberg.

■ With Extreme Prejudice

In this column for July 30/August 6 we mentioned a "geopolitical/financial tour" of South Africa being organized by Howard Phillips, chair of the Conservative Caucus, and Donald McAlvany, president of a precious-metals firm. Phillips and McAlvany's entourage should be closely examined by airport security. On a recent trip to the apartheid state, McAlvany urged South Africa's business community to silence Archbishop Desmond Tutu by any means possible, reported a Johannesburg newspaper, *The New Nation*, which obtained secret tape-recordings of the speech.

"The least you can do is remove the idiot's passport and not let him travel over to our country, and somebody might want to even shoot him," said McAlvany, a born-again Christian, to a Durban audience. McAlvany further declared that Tutu was "guilty of high treason" for supporting economic sanctions against South Africa.

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ARTICLES.

LETTER FROM EUROPE

An Optimistic Tragedy?

DANIEL SINGER

Perestroika is not manna from heaven.
—Mikhail Gorbachev, at the Nineteenth Soviet Communist Party Conference

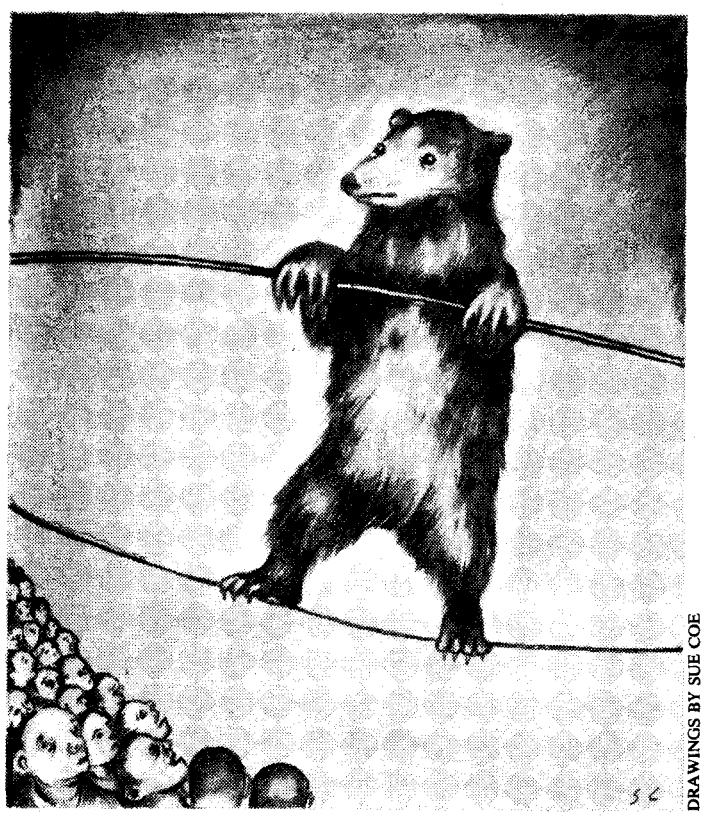
For years, if they wished to be honest, observers of the Soviet Union had to work like archeologists, digging below the political surface to discover real social changes taking place in the country. Today, as the frontiers of freedom are extended every day, as Soviet memory stretches into the past, as genuine debate picks up and institutions begin to be reshaped, one has the excitement of watching history in the making. But the exhilaration brings its own problems—and I don't mean for the conservative preachers who had sworn that the Evil Empire was frozen forever. They have by now conveniently forgotten their predictions and retreated to a new line of propaganda, some saying that Gorbachev is bound to break his political neck, others arguing that his only salvation lies in a conversion to capitalism. No, judging by some stern condemnations or uncritical endorsements on the left, it is Western socialists who face problems. They must revise their assessment of the nature of the rapidly changing Soviet society and brush up their concepts of revolution "from above" or "from below," as well as of the relationship between the two.

They must also hurry because, however important, the transformations of the past three years are merely the first stage of a vast upheaval, and the changes so far have been far easier to assess than those that are still to come. It is natural to be for *glasnost*, for the publication of banned books or of manuscripts lying hopelessly in a drawer, for the showing of films and the staging of plays hitherto forbidden by the censor. Who but the diehard defending a privileged position can be against freedom of the press, of television, against the extraordinary breath of fresh air that is sweeping through the Soviet Union?

The same is true of the reconquest of the recent past. The historical assessment of Stalin's rule and its aftermath is not just a question of rehabilitation and justice for the victims. The Russians need history, as a speaker at the Nineteenth All-Union Party Conference put it, to know "how we got into that swamp." Furthermore, as I have argued before in these pages, access to the past implies the right of access to the present [see Singer, "On Recapturing the Soviet Past," *The Nation*, December 12, 1987]. If Soviet citizens are allowed to have all the elements of the debate on, say, the industrialization of the 1920s, they are entitled to have a similar debate on *perestroika*.

It is in this context that there are some worrisome signs of new distortion. The way in which several writers have presented Trotsky not as the victim of Stalinism but as its inspirer is, to put it mildly, indecent. The problem, again, is not whether Trotsky was wrong or right in this or that dispute. It is my guess that in its present mood the bulk of the Soviet intelligentsia, given an honest choice, would probably opt for Nikolai Bukharin (not the early "left Communist" but the moderate Bukharin, advocate of industrialization at "a snail's pace") over Trotsky, the "prophet" of permanent revolution. The essential thing, however, is to give an honest choice. By now, the only decent attitude is the one advocated by people like the historian Yuri Afanasiev: Let all the writings, including those of Stalin, be published, and consider Soviet citizens adult enough to make up their own minds. This, after all, is the basis of elementary—let alone socialist—democracy.

Incidentally, the issue of the one-party state, at least as it is currently being presented, is probably not at this stage the main obstacle on the road toward democracy in the Soviet Union. Let us suppose that the principles of socialist pluralism, as advocated at the last party conference, were applied; that "democratic centralism" ceased to mean that all power flowed from above; that several candidates confronted one another on differing platforms in elections to all party organs and all state councils (i.e., the soviets) and were allowed to put forward minority views afterward. If these things happened, the party would be single in name only,



DRAWINGS BY SUE COE

Daniel Singer is The Nation*'s Europe correspondent and the author of* Is Socialism Doomed? The Meaning of Mitterrand *(Oxford University Press).*

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and even that not for long. What is at stake is practice rather than theory, how interests crystallize and are freely expressed. Indeed, all Soviet commentators, from Gorbachev on down, have found it quite awkward to justify the persistence of one-party rule in other than purely pragmatic terms ("under a one-party system which has been historically created and consolidated in our country," Gorbachev told the conference). This principle made sense while the C.P. was supposed to be carrying out its task in the context of a "dictatorship of the proletariat"; it makes none if the Soviet Union is, as all its leaders since Stalin have said, "a state of all people." The alleged absence of class contradictions confuses still further an already complex debate.

Tatyana Zaslavskaya, the influential president of the Soviet Sociological Association, is one of the few to define what is happening today as a "hard sociopolitical struggle" involving "a radical redistribution of power." But having thus clarified matters, she promptly muddies them again by describing *perestroika*, in the June 4 *Izvestia*, as "the transfer of a large part of incomes, rights and social privileges from the top stories of the social pyramid to the lower ones." That is just not so—or, to put it more optimistically, not yet so. If it were, the Soviet leadership would not be faced with such a dilemma in trying to win over the working class to its managerial revolution. Indeed, what we have witnessed so far is essentially a struggle between two sections of the establishment: the rising managerial modernizers, backed by the bulk of the professional intelligentsia, versus the party apparatchiks and their allies in the ruling bureaucracy.

Admittedly, not all the followers of Mikhail Gorbachev have the crude candor of a Nikolai Shmelev, for whom efficiency is *the* virtue and the market its eternal instrument, or of S.N. Fyodorov, the successful head of an enterprise in ophthalmological surgery, who proclaimed at the last party conference that "leaders are the foundation of society," and added that since fixed salaries have been abandoned at his clinic some doctors are able to earn a decent living that allows them, "so to speak, to feed their children properly, develop culturally" and so on. (Since the earnings he mentioned were three to four times the national average, one must assume that the majority of the population should live indecently, feed its children improperly, etc.) Even so, in order to extricate the Soviet economy from its profound crisis, Gorbachev addresses his countrymen with the famous slogan of the nineteenth-century French politician François Guizot: *Enrichissez-vous.* His supporters are extolling the market, preaching wage differentiation, casting anathema against "equalizing socialism."

The deep distaste for equality amid the reformers does not imply any fondness for it among their opponents. Quite the contrary: The conservatives are in favor of the existing system, of the pecking order, of prestige and privilege for the mighty and their faithful servants. (Incidentally, although the *nomenklatura* is now coming under attack, that is for being a mafia rather than as a method of government.) The second point to keep in mind is that the alliances are still fragile and provisional, especially among Gorbachev's followers. Here one can distinguish those who wish to preserve full employment and those who do not care, those who want to keep salary differences within bounds and those for whom the sky is the limit, foreshadowing potential future cleavages between those who will try to maintain control over the commanding heights of the economy and those who may be carried away by the logic of the market.

Last but not least, there is Mikhail Gorbachev himself, who is striving, successfully so far, to keep the transition in check. Unlike Nikita Khrushchev, his reform predecessor, Gorbachev is obviously aware of the fact that bureaucratic resistance, fed by vested interests, will not yield without serious pressure from below. Hence his promise last year to give workers more power in the factories, including the right to elect their managers (a pledge that so far has remained purely verbal). Hence his current project to grant power to the soviets, though under party supervision. Hence, however carefully the process is stage-managed, the possibility that the movement from below will at some point rewrite the script altogether. Zaslavskaya's description, inaccurate for now, could thus turn out to be a farsighted forecast.

How should a Western left-winger react to these momentous prospects, beyond a natural joy that the Bolshevik birthplace is once again stirring? To set the problem in context, I shall first sum up the attitude of two friends who have written at length on the subject. One of them sees Gorbachevism in a historical perspective, as the result of deep social transformations that kept up their subterranean work even during the Leonid Brezhnev years. He thinks leftist critics, myself included, are too harsh on the Eastern European leaders because we tend to judge them by socialist standards. The Soviet Union, he sometimes says privately, exaggerating for effect, has to be looked at independently of the question of socialism—though he is well aware that to take Marx, the Revolution's early aspirations and even today's vocabulary out of the story is to deprive it of its major dramatic dimension. My other friend, on the contrary, thrilled by the new regime's references to the power of the people or the strength of the soviets, tends to view Gorbachev as the Lenin of our day, and his companions as the latter-day Bolsheviks. He can do so only by exaggerating the socialist convictions of Gorbachev's entourage and by turning a blind eye to the controversy over egalitarianism.

Fortunately, the charge that Gorbachev is a "traitor to the cause," which in the past would have dominated the debate, can now be dismissed quite lightly. Thirty-five years after Stalin's death, and thirty-two after Khrushchev's indictment of his crimes, the Soviet "model" lies shattered in pieces. Even the Communist Parties no longer hold it up as an example. Naturally, if one still saw Leonid Brezhnev as the champion of the rights and powers of the Soviet worker, or Konstantin Chernenko as the herald of world revolution, then the current reformers (who often talk, Thatcher-like, of "idlers and loafers" and clearly do not give a damn about the spread of socialism) could easily be branded in traditional fashion as betrayers and gravediggers. But they are nothing of the sort. Let us not invent new fictions. Egalitari-

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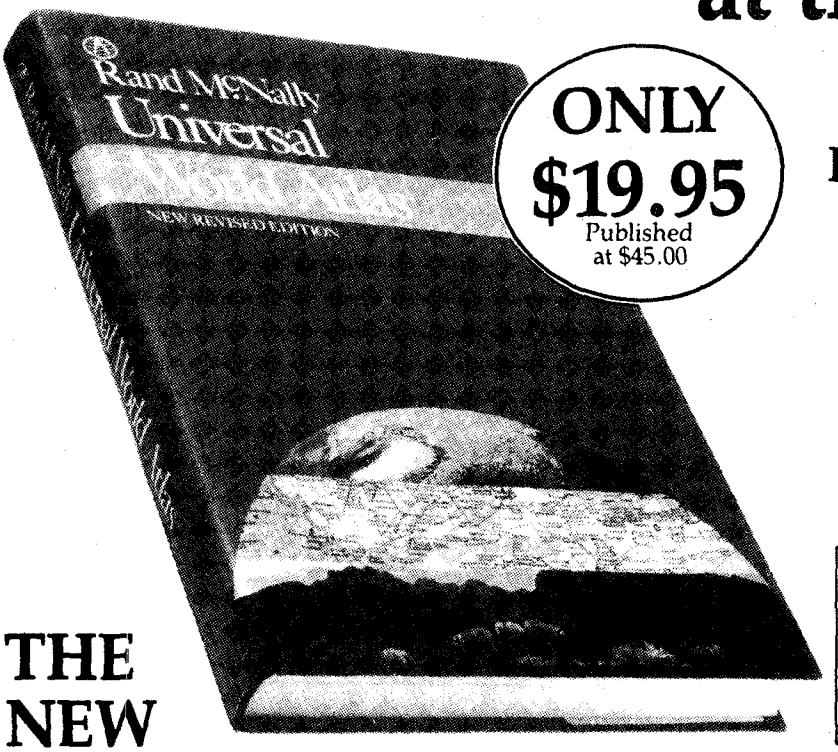

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anism was condemned in Russia by Stalin over half a century ago, and the interests of world revolution were subordinated to those of the Soviet state even earlier than that.

The reformers represent a break not with socialist planning but with a command economy at the end of its tether. They have a growing awareness that available resources leave little room for extensive methods of expansion and that science cannot develop in a political straitjacket. They are carried along by popular discontent with the fact that, seventy years after the Revolution, people still have to waste several hours a day standing in line and estranged couples have to stick together because housing waiting lists are so long. The reformers express the aspirations of a new generation, less frightened and more educated, one resenting hypocrisy and the revolting gap between slogans and reality, a generation that demands both a better life and greater freedom. But they also express the aspirations of the "haves" who would like to have more, of all the Fyodorovs who are convinced that they deserve to be much more equal than others.

In a way, two centuries after 1789, the Russians are following in French footsteps. Freedom of thought, of speech, of assembly, the rule of law—*perestroika*, in a sense, is also Russia's unaccomplished bourgeois revolution. And we are right to hail this development. Bourgeois freedoms are not negligible, particularly in a country where heroic exploits were coupled with inhuman arbitrariness. Socialism, in fact, never intended to abolish bourgeois freedoms. It called them "formal" freedoms because, after the revolution, they were to be filled with economic and social content, without which they remain both precious and, at the same time, somewhat phony.

Current events in the Soviet Union remind us of this analysis. I certainly would not call the country socialist or claim that under Brezhnev (or Stalin for that matter) the Soviet workers were masters of their factories (a view that reached the columns of *Pravda* on July 26 in a striking letter from Yuri Afanasiev). But in a country where the means of production have been nationalized, managerial reform raises at once the problem of property and power, both in the factory and the nation at large, while bourgeois freedoms linked with a doctrine of inequality—as espoused by the Fyodorovs of the world—raise doubts about the very foundations on which this society rests. Beyond the issues of efficiency and productivity that the reformers have put on the agenda looms the unanswered question of socialist democracy.

Rereading this already long letter, I am struck by its impersonal tone. The Western left is too heterogeneous to hide behind. One cannot honestly comment on Soviet perspectives without revealing one's own premises. So let me do so, if only in shorthand. I belong to the school, family or tradition for which 1917, like 1789, is a key landmark, a date marking the beginning of a new era in the struggle of humankind for mastery over its fate. But mine is also a school for which the Bolshevik Revolution, or rather its unsplendid isolation, is part of the great Marxist tragedy, the failure of a project to spread to those areas for which it was designed—the most advanced capitalist countries. In Russia, *dixit* Lenin, barbarism had to be uprooted by barbarian means. The result, too, was partly barbarian and still casts a shadow over socialism, which has come to be artificially identified with the Soviet experiment. Yet whom are we to blame? If seventy years ago the Bolsheviks stood tragically alone, it was the historical fault of the Western left, unable to carry out its pledge to turn war into revolution. And if budding socialists in Eastern Europe can perceive no alternative vision, it is entirely our own failing.

The humility that ought to result from recognizing this, however, should not once again be translated into submission. Gone, one may hope, are the days when anything Russian was sanctified and even the unnecessary vice was turned into supreme virtue. The Soviet Union should be treated as what it is: a postcapitalist society *sui generis*, a product of peculiar circumstances. But if we have no model at our disposal (and that is no bad thing, since models are there to be imitated), we cannot deny a heritage, some of it written in blood. Our duty, therefore, if any, is to warn the peoples of Eastern Europe that the capitalist market is not as pretty as it looks through their new rose-tinted spectacles. It is to remind them that socialism is not just about the development of productive forces (even if their desire for a more comfortable life is perfectly natural). *Pace* Gorbachev, equality—which is not to be confused with uniformity—figures prominently in the socialist vision. It is to be achieved by the progressive elimination of social inequalities and differences between town and country, physical and mental work, men and women, the rulers and the ruled—this gradual attack on the social division of labor that will lead to the withering away of the state. Above all, socialism is a conscious conquest, a collective attempt by the "associate producers" to rationally master their destiny. As such, it must be a movement from below.

Personally, I doubt whether "market socialism" is any more likely to answer Russia's fundamental questions than the goulash socialism of thirty years ago. The road probably leads through some inventive reconciliation between planning and democracy. But this is no reason to quarrel with history. Now that the command economy has reached a dead end, the odds are that the countries of Eastern Europe will shift for some time to a greater reliance on private enterprise and the market. This period should allow forces hitherto hidden beneath the surface to take shape and seek to express their interests. What this ferment will produce cannot be foretold. Once the lid is lifted, not all the smells are appetizing: In the Soviet Union today, one can clearly distinguish the stench of jingoism, reaction and racism. But it is not absurd to expect the rise of a new socialist generation. Seeking at once freedom and equality, it may resume the original task, tackling in succession the old *nomenklatura* and the new managerial masters. The greatest tribute I can pay to Mikhail Gorbachev is that speculation about *some* power to the soviets in the not-too-distant future is no longer abstract. There, here and everywhere, the tragedy may have a happy ending after all. □

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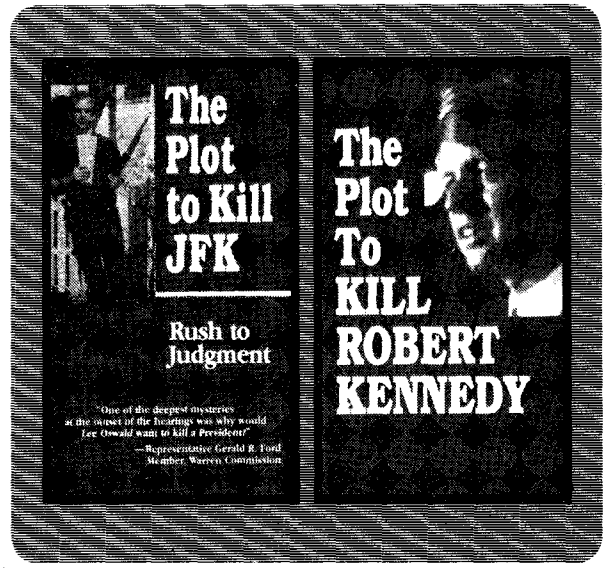
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THE FEDS VS. OBSCENITY

Putting the First Out of Business

ROBERT CORN-REVERE

Around midday on November 18, 1987, a jury in Federal court in Virginia decided that Dennis and Barbara Pryba were subject to the forfeiture provisions of the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO) for selling six obscene magazines and four videotapes. By nightfall, U.S. Marshals had padlocked the Prybas' three adult bookstores and eight videotape clubs.

The case presents the first use of the RICO statute in an obscenity prosecution. RICO empowers the government to seize all "interests," including every property interest, connected to a racketeering enterprise. Originally adopted in 1970 to combat organized crime, the law was amended by Congress in 1984 to get at smut. The "racket" for which the Prybas were convicted involved the sale of obscene merchandise valued at about $105. For this, they forfeited businesses worth approximately $1 million, including all the stock and personal property in their stores, nine bank accounts, five vehicles and a warehouse. And that was before sentencing.

About one month after the jury's verdict, Judge T.S. Ellis 3d sentenced Dennis Pryba under the Federal anti-obscenity law to three years in jail plus five years' probation, added a fine of $75,000 and ordered him to perform 300 hours of community service. Barbara was given a three-year suspended sentence and ordered to pay $200,000. She has had to sell her house to comply. Ellis, a recent Reagan appointee, described the punishment as "lenient."

The judge rejected arguments that government confiscation of the contents of bookstores restricts freedom of expression. He explained, "Once it is decided that obscenity does not merit First Amendment protection and indeed, once it is decided that obscenity is so pernicious that it should be criminally proscribed, then a subsequent punishment, like RICO's forfeiture scheme, is a sensible and wholly legitimate law enforcement weapon. *It is specially designed to* chill or deter proscribed, unprotected speech." [Emphasis added.]

This view of the First Amendment sounds grimly reminiscent of the logic of censorship articulated by Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes in his dissenting opinion in the 1919 case *Abrams v. United States*. "Persecution for the expression of opinion seems to me perfectly logical," Holmes wrote. "If you have no doubt of your premises or your power and want a certain result with all your heart, you naturally express your wishes in law and sweep away all opposition." But Holmes concluded that the theory of our Constitution rejects such logic, and that "the ultimate good desired is better reached by free trade in ideas."

Nevertheless, every few decades the nation's policymakers stumble upon some end that they believe justifies the most drastic means. Now it is "obscenity." Congress recently passed a law banning interstate transmission of so-called dial-a-porn services; the Federal Communications Commission has been transformed into the morals police of the airwaves [see Corn, "The F.C.C. Cleans Up the Airways," *The Nation*, December 5, 1987]; and the Justice Department now devotes substantial resources to dreaming up new ways to sanitize the nation's reading material. Although Federal courts are currently reviewing the dial-a-porn law and have ordered the F.C.C. to reconsider part of its indecency policy, the bureaucratic drive to censor continues unabated.

These efforts have been assisted by vague Supreme Court decisions on the meaning of obscenity. In the landmark 1957 *Roth v. United States*, Justice William Brennan defined obscenity as material that deals with sex "in a manner appealing to prurient interest" and that lacks "even the slightest redeeming social importance." The standard was intended to fully protect the portrayal of sex in art, literature and scientific works while allowing government the latitude to go after certain "hard-core" materials. But as Justice William O. Douglas warned in his dissenting opinion, such a test "is too loose, too capricious, too destructive of freedom of expression" and it "creates a regime where in the battle between the literati and the Philistines, the Philistines are certain to win."

After sixteen years of trying to apply the *Roth* test, Justice Brennan finally conceded Douglas's point. He acknowledged that judicial attempts to apply the standard had led to "hopeless confusion" and concluded that no one, whether judge or layman, could know in advance whether a given book or film would be considered obscene. Nevertheless, the Supreme Court in 1973 narrowly adopted a new test that expanded on the *Roth* standard. In *Miller v. California*, the Court held by a vote of 5 to 4 that a work is obscene if it depicts or describes sexual conduct in a patently offensive way, if it appeals to the prurient interest according to contemporary community standards, and if it lacks serious scientific, artistic or literary value. But this test has proved no easier to apply than the earlier one. Moreover, the *Miller* decision appeared to give the green light to local initiatives to crack down on porn. As part of this movement, communities have attempted to ban everything from hard-core smut to sex-education manuals to the cover of *Cosmopolitan*.

A benchmark in the Administration's war on smut was the report of the Attorney General's Commission on Pornography in 1986. The commission was charged with the duty to report on ways in which "the spread of pornography could be contained," and had concluded in advance that pornography is a "serious national problem." Most of the commissioners had been active in antiporn movements. Not surpris-

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ing, then, that the panel delivered to Edwin Meese 3d a seven-point plan aimed at cracking down on obscenity [see Carole S. Vance, "The Meese Commission on the Road," *The Nation*, August 2/9, 1986].

To implement the crusade against smut, the commission proposed the creation of a National Obscenity Enforcement Unit in the Justice Department. The unit became a reality nineteen months ago. Consisting of a law center and a task force, it assists and trains state and local prosecutors, helps draft legislation, disseminates information and provides for enforcement on a national scale. One U.S. Attorney in each of the Justice Department's ninety-three offices nationwide has been designated to work with the task force.

RICO forfeitures appear to be the centerpiece of the obscenity unit's enforcement strategy. The Meese commission had concluded that using forfeitures "could, in appropriate cases, virtually eliminate a large-scale pornography operation," and task force attorneys have embraced this approach. *The American Lawyer* of this March quoted one enthusiastic Justice Department lawyer as saying, "We wanted to do RICOs to wipe out the business." Robert Showers, head of the obscenity unit, was more sedate, pointing out that it would be inappropriate to talk about ongoing investigations. But he confirmed that the forfeiture penalty is "a major tool or weapon" that "will be used in appropriate cases." With pornography, Showers noted, "you have to take out the enterprise as a whole; RICO does that." Another task force prosecutor put it more bluntly: "The purpose of RICO is to excise out the cancer."

The Pryba case was the first real test of the enforcement policy, which so far has been a complete success from the government's perspective. The case is currently on appeal to the U.S. Court of Appeals in Virginia. Meanwhile, the Supreme Court has agreed to review a series of obscenity cases involving an Indiana RICO law. But the National Obscenity Enforcement Unit is not waiting for additional confirmation of its authority. It already has helped draft legislation that would further entrench forfeiture as part of the fabric of our law.

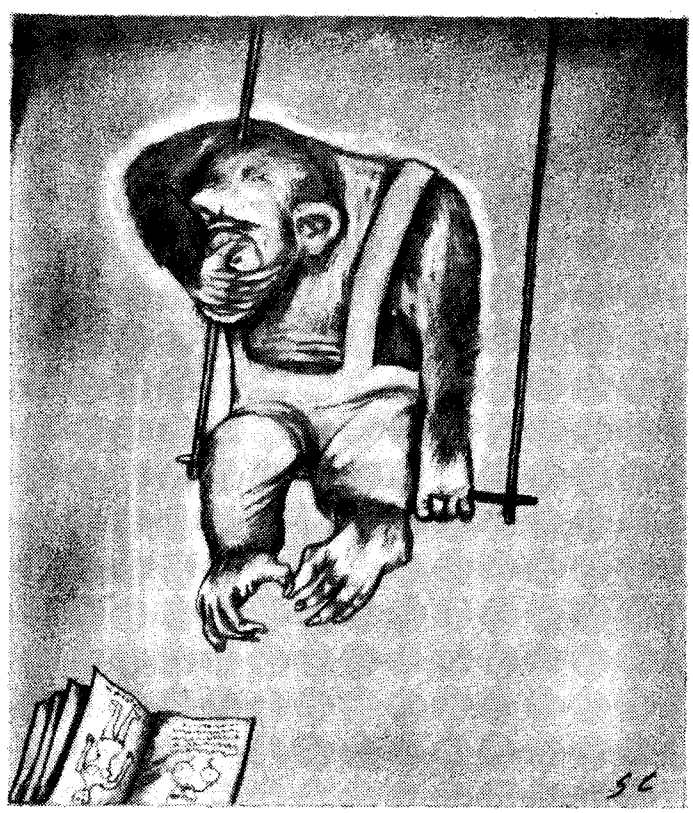
That bill, the Child Protection and Obscenity Enforcement Act of 1988, was announced in a White House ceremony last November and introduced in the Senate by Strom Thurmond in February. Among other provisions, it would penalize anyone who "knowingly utters any obscene language or distributes any obscene matter by means of cable television or subscription services on television." The outlawed means of distribution would include cable, broadcast, microwave and satellite transmissions. It would provide for forfeiture of any property "used or intended to be used" to transmit obscene programming. Showers confirmed in an interview that this provision could be used to seize a cable system, broadcast station or communications satellite. The Attorney General would be empowered to retain the property for government use or sell it at auction.

Like the proposed ban on video porn, RICO was adopted to enable authorities to put an end to the "business of crime." The forfeiture provisions were specially designed to prevent criminal enterprises from continuing after the principals had been convicted and to prevent violators from exercising control over the business from jail. Forfeiture is mandatory upon conviction and can extend to all a convicted defendant's interests in the enterprise—even if the assets are not part of the racket for which a defendant was convicted.

Government lawyers see no constitutional problem in using this solution. They argue that seeking forfeitures in obscenity cases is legitimate. Assistant U.S. Attorney Lawrence Leiser, who prosecuted the Prybas, said it is a "great misconception" that taking over bookstores is in any way novel. "The government regularly seizes the assets of RICO defendants, and Mr. Pryba was the sole, 100 percent stockholder of these businesses," he said in a telephone interview. "It just happens that some of the assets are obscene and some are not obscene."

As it turns out, the vast majority of tapes in the Prybas' video stores were far from obscene. Between 75 and 80 percent of the tapes were not erotic, but were intended for general audiences. The Prybas claimed in court filings that the most popular and profitable rentals were films such as *The Wizard of Oz*, *Gone With the Wind* and *Casablanca*. Nor did the jury ever have an opportunity to consider the legality of the vast majority of the publications seized from the bookstores.

None of this matters, according to Leiser. "The business does not have to be illegitimate itself to be subject to forfeiture under RICO. It is the interest of the individual [convicted of racketeering] that is forfeited." Both Leiser and Showers compare the Prybas' case to the prosecution of drug kingpins: If the enterprise is based on ill-gotten gains, it may be seized under RICO. In any event, Leiser and Showers point out that the Supreme Court has ruled that obscenity is not protected by the First Amendment.



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True enough, obscenity is not constitutionally protected speech. However, other types of speech are also exempt from First Amendment protections: libel, "fighting words," incitement to crime, disclosure of classified information. Yet this does not give the government carte blanche. The First Amendment would not tolerate, for example, closing down *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* for publishing the Pentagon papers or running a libelous story. The Supreme Court has stressed time and time again that separating protected expression from that which is not requires "sensitive tools." The forfeiture penalty hardly fits this description.

Forfeiture chills speech at the margin of constitutional protection by raising the stakes for second-guessing a jury. Store owners will be far less likely to stock nonobscene erotic materials if there is even a small chance of facing a Federal racketeering charge. In *United States v. Pryba*, for example, some of the materials on trial were found to be obscene while others were not. But no bookseller is going to bet the ranch on the difference between erotic materials (which are constitutionally protected) and obscene ones (which are not). In this respect, the chilling effect of forfeiture extends far beyond obscenity: Forfeiture is also prior restraint of all nonerotic materials seized. Confiscating books and tapes does not just deter speech, it silences it altogether. Using forfeiture in this way is the essence of censorship.

Nor is obscenity "just like any other crime," as the Federal prosecutors suggest. As the Supreme Court emphasized in *Near v. Minnesota*, the landmark 1931 case on prior restraint, the First Amendment cannot be ignored simply because the government alleges that a defendant is engaged in the "business" of defamation (which, like obscenity, is unprotected speech). Similarly, the Court historically has imposed stringent procedures limiting the government's power to seize publications absent a judicial ruling covering the specific item in question. Rounding up books or films presents constitutional issues that do not arise for other types of contraband traditionally associated with organized crime, such as gambling paraphernalia or liquor. Applying these and other well-established principles, the Court in 1980 invalidated a Texas law that authorized closing an adult movie theater that had been proved an exhibitor of obscene films in the past. The Court struck down an almost identical law aimed at adult bookstores the following year.

Legal analysis aside, there is an important policy question of whether the government should be entrusted with the type of coercive power inherent in the forfeiture penalty. Any bookstore caught selling a couple of obscene books (out of an inventory of perhaps thousands) could conceivably be prosecuted under RICO and have its entire stock seized. There is simply no principled basis by which the Prybas can be branded the appropriate targets of the government's campaign and "mainstream" bookstores declared safe. When it comes down to the bottom line, the government appears to be saying, "Trust us—we're just going after the scumbags."

Fortunately, we do not have to rely only on the good faith of the smutbusters. Courts have begun to review and

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block some of the Reagan Administration's latest efforts to create a G-rated culture. It is a sure bet that an election-year Congress will be no help, even when the members recognize the constitutional values at issue. The House was fully informed of the First Amendment problems when it considered the dial-a-porn ban, yet the measure was adopted overwhelmingly. As Representative Dan Coats noted at the time, "We are not elected in this body to stand here and make a constitutional decision. That is done across the street, at the Supreme Court." □

Welfare

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

become employed by offering them social services—job placement, education and training programs, child care and Medicaid coverage. Women who refuse to participate in mandatory work programs face a reduction in (or loss of) benefits or work relief. But no sanctions are specified if the state welfare department fails to uphold its part of the contract.

Welfare reform has captured the support of many liberals because proponents initially promised a national minimum benefit, child care and Medicaid benefits, increases in services and an extension of A.F.D.C. to two-parent families in all states. In the end, however, the changes that emerged from the political process offered nothing more than very old wine in new and smaller bottles.

The national minimum benefit was the first to disappear from the legislative proposals. The loss of this long-advocated liberal reform leaves the states in charge of setting A.F.D.C. benefit levels. Not only has the amount of the welfare check varied widely from one state to another but from 1970 to 1985 the real value of the average A.F.D.C. grant plunged by 31 percent. In 1988 the maximum combined A.F.D.C. and food stamp benefits did not bring a family of three in any state up to the government's own poverty line. In thirty-nine states these benefits failed to reach 75 percent of this understated threshold. This not-so-benign neglect occurred even though the costs of A.F.D.C. leveled off in the mid-1970s and in 1987 accounted for only about 0.76 percent of the Federal budget. The final welfare reform bill provides few, if any, Federal incentives to the states to increase their welfare payments.

The original promise of enriched employment services for welfare mothers also was eroded. Instead of mandating the states to provide education, training and job placement programs as initially proposed, the Federal bill makes most services optional. The states will be required to provide only the least costly job search, basic education and "workfare" programs rather than the more expensive skill-building

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education and training services. Although most of the low-paying jobs open to welfare recipients lack child care and health insurance, Congress preferred to leave the provision of these benefits up to the states. The hard-won mandatory provisions finally enacted cover only nine months of child care and up to twelve months of Medicaid (the second six months subject to a premium). No one asks how women in low-paying jobs will pay for these services once the temporary benefits run out. Quality day care for poor children is also out of reach. Congress did lift the maximum reimbursement for child care payments from $160 a month to the prevailing market price, but the states still have considerable discretion in setting the rates.

The new welfare law makes the currently optional A.F.D.C.-UP program, which provides benefits to two-parent families in which the primary earner is unemployed, mandatory in all the states. But instead of making A.F.D.C. available to one- and two-parent families, a legislative compromise restricted the already limited A.F.D.C.-UP program in new ways. It permits the states to introduce a mandatory workfare component for the first time and to confine aid to six months in any twelve-month period.

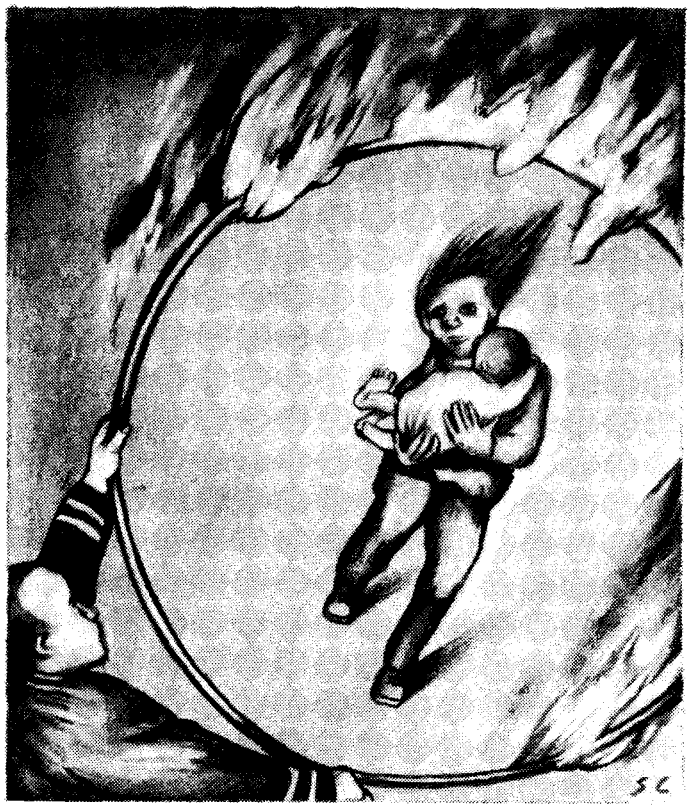
The use of automatic child support deductions from the wages of absent fathers to enforce child support more effectively has been billed as necessary to increase parental responsibility and reduce welfare costs. It recognizes that nearly one in four children nationwide lives with only one parent and that 60 percent of their families are legally entitled to support, but that just over half have received even partial payments, and many have received no support at all. Garnishing wages to recoup program costs may force those absent fathers who can do so to support their children. But for poor men it may be more like squeezing blood from a stone. Past efforts at child support, like the current one, imply that fathers of children on A.F.D.C. are irresponsible parents who avoid supporting their children because the state is doing the job. To date this approach has produced only modest financial returns and has pushed many poor fathers away from even a minimal involvement with the home.

The new bill's shortcomings should be no surprise, given its conservative underpinnings. Proponents have used a variety of disingenuous and misleading arguments to sell as "reform" what is actually a regressive measure that hurts rather than helps the poor.

The advocates of spurious reform glibly invoke feminist ideas on the desirability of jobholding women to justify throwing welfare mothers off the rolls and into the labor market. To justify mandatory rather than voluntary work and training programs, welfare reform advocates point to the high labor force participation rate of women, ignoring the declining standard of living that has compelled more and more middle-class wives and mothers of very young children to enter the work force. They fail to mention that 43 percent of all A.F.D.C. children are under age 6, or that while two-thirds of all married mothers with young children are employed, less than one-third work full time, year-round. They also ignore the labor market's inhospitality to welfare mothers, who, like many other women, are very likely to fill part-time jobs and be paid less than the $7,000 annual minimum wage. Although some on welfare lack the necessary motivation, education or training for better jobs, many have been adversely affected by the decline of better-paying manufacturing jobs, the rapid expansion of part-time and temporary work, the unending segregation of jobs by race and sex, the persistently low minimum wage and other economic trends that from 1978 to 1985 increased the number of working poor by 50 percent.

The campaign for welfare reform also draws heavily on negative stereotypes of poor women. While the media celebrates professional women who give up their high-powered jobs for family life, welfare mothers who want to stay home with their children are viewed as unmotivated to work rather than unwilling to accept substandard wages and unlicensed child care, and as suffering from poor work habits rather than a poor education, limited job opportunities and abusive economic policies.

Similarly, the promise that welfare reform will break the "cycle of dependency" feeds on the negative vision of a female-dominated welfare culture that keeps families mired in poverty, dependent on public aid and in homes that, lacking a man at the helm, are by definition disorganized and incapable of properly socializing children. The widely held belief that public assistance causes family breakups, soaring illegitimacy rates and reliance on programs like A.F.D.C. from one generation to the next persists despite the failure of research since the mid-1970s to support these stereotypic assumptions. Public opinion has yet to accept what researchers now know: that poverty, not welfare, causes families to break up; that most daughters of welfare



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mothers do not end up on A.F.D.C.; and that most families leave welfare rolls within two years.

But these facts mean little to welfare reformers. Their real desire is to shrink the A.F.D.C. rolls and reduce the program's costs rather than meet the needs of poor women. Putting them to work would also help enlarge the cheap labor pool. During most of the postwar period, in keeping with the age-old rule that public aid must be less attractive than paid work, A.F.D.C.'s low benefits, restrictive residency rules and moralistic eligibility requirements (e.g., "suitable" homes and the "no man in the house" rule, threats of child removal and midnight raids) operated to keep poor white women and women of color off the rolls and in low-paying jobs. During the 1950s, a variety of complex social and economic factors caused unwed mothers and women of color to replace white widows as the predominant groups on welfare. At this time many states increased their use of vaguely defined moral fitness standards rather than economic need to determine eligibility for aid, which effectively punished women for departing from traditional wife and mother roles and forced them to work. For black women such practices date back to slavery and continue white society's pattern of refusing to grant their families the same respect, recognition and protection accorded to the white middle class.

In the late 1960s, as the Supreme Court declared moral fitness and residency requirements unconstitutional, and as civil rights and welfare mothers' groups began to claim welfare as a right, Congress introduced more formal work requirements into A.F.D.C., notably the Work Incentive (WIN) program in 1967. By requiring women on A.F.D.C. to participate in work or training programs, WIN formally reversed A.F.D.C.'s policy of helping single mothers remain at home with their children. Unhappy with WIN's limitations, during the 1980s the Reagan Administration encouraged the states to experiment with the new welfare-for-work programs. Paving the way for the current welfare reform bill, the WIN demonstration projects provided incentives for the states to test a variety of new employment programs.

Today's welfare reform comes at a time when pressures from the private sector to increase the supply of low-cost labor have intensified. The Committee on Economic Development, the National Alliance for Business and the Labor Department all have expressed fears about the shortfall of young workers willing to fill an expanding number of entry-level positions, the skill level and analytic capacity of the emerging work force and the trend toward higher wages already evident in fast-food outlets, supermarkets, banks, hospitals and some offices.

By transforming A.F.D.C. from an income support to a mandatory work and training program, which increases the supply of women for the entry-level jobs historically reserved for them and thus lowers overall wage rates, welfare reform may help to ease industry's current labor-market problems. Indeed, most state welfare-for-work programs place A.F.D.C. mothers in low-paying jobs. The Massachusetts employment and training program participants average about $9,000 a year; in Santa Clara, California, they receive only $6.50 an hour, although state officials say that $11 is needed to stay off the welfare rolls. The New York–based Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation found that, on the average, welfare recipients in 1987 earned less than $4.14 an hour, or $4,000 below the poverty line for a family of four. A recent update, covering a longer period of time, reported that participants' earnings have increased only $300 to $500 a year.

"Welfare reform" meshes well with the Reagan Administration's ongoing effort to cheapen the cost of labor. Although it is not always seen in this way, A.F.D.C. is an economic way station for poor women who are temporarily without a paying job or a breadwinner. One source of the controversy surrounding the program may be that even its low benefits offer the potential of a financial cushion that enables women to avoid abusive marriages or insecure jobs. If properly funded at higher levels, A.F.D.C. might increase the economic independence of poor women and cause fewer of them to be available for the low-paying service jobs now on the rise.

The Reagan Administration is also committed to chipping away at the philosophical basis of the entire welfare system, including A.F.D.C. By replacing liberal tenets of entitlement, self-determination and Federal responsibility with more conservative notions of contract, compulsion and states' rights, welfare reform erodes some of the fundamental principles that support the U.S. welfare state. In 1981, the Reagan Administration first declared that the idea of entitlement was wrong. Transforming A.F.D.C. into an employment program based on a contractual arrangement furthers this goal by implicitly undercutting the societal obligation to provide cash assistance. A contract between parties as unequal as a welfare mother and the state effectively weakens the protections against economic insecurity and loss of social rights that the welfare state, at least in theory, arose to provide.

The mandatory features of A.F.D.C.—forced work for recipients and automatic wage garnishments for absent parents—also undermine the democratic principles of self-determination and free choice. Coercive requirements substitute the market-based concept of exchange for the rights-based idea of entitlement. Preferring the stick over

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the carrot, the welfare reform denies poor women the right to decide for themselves whether staying home or going to work is best for their children, a choice still granted many women of the middle class. The implication that caring for one's children at home is not productive work (but caring for the children of others is) blatantly discounts the enormous contribution made by women's unpaid labor to their families and society at large. The system of coercion also blames the victim by suggesting that welfare mothers will not work outside the home and poor fathers will not support their children unless forced to do so by the government. This simply ignores the facts. The Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation found that 61 percent of the participants in San Diego's WIN demonstration found work, but so did 55 percent of the nonparticipants. Only 5 to 7 percent *more* of those who participated in a variety of WIN programs became employed than those who did not. While some poor men, like those of other social classes, are overtly negligent, many A.F.D.C. fathers simply lack the income needed to support their families.

Although it was dropped at the last minute, it's worth remembering that for months the welfare reform bill included a provision that would begin to carry out the Administration's continuing effort to defederalize A.F.D.C. Handing enormous discretion to the states, it would have allowed them to consolidate a variety of Federal social welfare programs, to use the funds to modify A.F.D.C. or create alternatives to it and to be exempt from various Federal requirements that safeguard clients' rights. Although it was defeated in committee, its near passage signals the difficulties confronting liberals who for years have sought to federalize A.F.D.C. in order to standardize its benefits and eligibility rules and make it less vulnerable to pressures of racism, sexism, antiunionism and opposition to social programs that often originate in the states.

The United States is one of the few Western industrialized countries without a national children's or family allowance that provides cash aid to all families regardless of their composition. The new welfare law has not changed this at all. True reform must include more participation by welfare mothers and must look past the current A.F.D.C. program to the entire social welfare system. This means a commitment to assuring economic security through income support programs for all families, with benefits at or above the poverty line and indexed to inflation. It means full-employment policies that provide jobs for all those ready and able to work but that also close the male/female and the white/nonwhite wage gaps, that enforce antidiscrimination and affirmative-action laws and that open white-male-held jobs to those now excluded from them. Caretaking roles must receive support regardless of who carries them out, and the gender division of labor that still leaves women exclusively responsible for children and the home must be revised. In brief, we must recognize equal rights and responsibilities within the family and in the workplace and assure that the needs of all people are satisfactorily met. Reform must ultimately go beyond questions of poverty to those of redistribution, full employment and genuine equality for all. □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Allegories of Alger

MICHAEL ROGIN

RECOLLECTIONS OF A LIFE. *By Alger Hiss. Henry Holt. 240 pp. $19.95.*

About Alger Hiss there would seem to be only two possibilities. One version of the Hiss case makes him into the American Dreyfus. Since the initial accusations of Communist Party membership lacked plausibility and documentary evidence, this story goes, Whittaker Chambers and members of the national security apparatus, like the French Army before them, forged papers to prove that Hiss had spied for a foreign power. But unlike Dreyfus, Hiss was also the victim of vengeful, unrequited love from a seedy, disturbed floater who cast Hiss and himself as the stars in a secret fantasy of his own imagining and in a public inquisition. Both the Hiss and the Dreyfus cases transformed national politics, but where the French left established Dreyfus's innocence and rose to political power, the American left never recovered from the Hiss persecution. Like Dreyfus, however, Hiss had a life before and after he was caught up in efforts to foment the cold war. Hiss frees himself in these *Recollections of a Life* from being defined by the war against Communism.

Begin again, from the other point of view. *Recollections* is the climax of Alger Hiss's forty-year struggle to pretend he is not guilty of perjury and espionage. Before Chambers exposed him, Hiss had risen to direct the State Department Office of Special Political Affairs, make his presence felt at Yalta and attain the position of Secretary General at the founding session of the United Nations. But as Hiss rose in the State Department, he was passing documents to the Soviet Union. Convicted by his own handwriting and typewriter, shown to be tied to the Communist agent Chambers more intimately and over a longer period than he acknowledged, Hiss nonetheless continues to present himself as an American innocent. He more closely resembles another native folk hero, the confidence man.

One of these versions of the Hiss case is true and the other is false; it is as simple as that. One requires a government conspiracy, the other a Communist conspiracy; in one, Chambers's fantasies magnify Hiss's importance, in the other Hiss's denials obliterate Chambers's importance; in one Hiss is the man he appeared to be to virtually everyone who came into contact with him, in the other he continues to lead a double life. In one these *Recollections* tell us, in Kurt Vonnegut's words of praise on the back cover, "who he really was and is"; in the other, as for the counterspy protagonist of Vonnegut's *Mother Night*, the motto "You are what you appear to be" points to Hiss's duplicity. Read one way, Tony Hiss's book on his father, published a decade ago, testifies to the love between father and son; read the other way, it brings deceit into the home.

These two versions of the Hiss case divide not simply left from right but also those on the left who emphasize their anti-Stalinism from those who come out of a popular-front tradition. Both versions have produced compelling narratives, but these tend to have force as literature rather than history. Internally consistent, they too often lack important evidentiary links between the story they tell and the history from which it has been made. Is a response possible to Hiss's *Recollections* that endorses neither version of the Hiss case? Such a response cannot do justice to Hiss (if he is innocent) or to Chambers (if he is not), but it can say something about Hiss's memoir as a personal document, and about the light it sheds on his relationship to the popular front and the Red scare. And by reconnecting Hiss to history rather than espionage, we can understand the distorting effects of imprisoning American history in the allegory of Chambers and Hiss.

So begin yet again. From the opening pages, in which Alger Hiss introduces his father's suicide and the aunt who came to live with and read to his family, this is a beautiful book. The chapter on the summer with brother Donald in Giverny, where Donald was recovering from ulcers and the two young men had chaste romances with two French girls, wonderfully evokes the quiet country village after Monet's death and before American tourism. The picture of Oliver Wendell Holmes—Hiss read to the old man when he served for a year as his "surrogate son" and private secretary—is as intimate and memorable as any we have. There are fine appreciations of Felix Frankfurter (Hiss's teacher at Harvard law school, who had recommended him to Holmes); of Eleanor Roosevelt (when Paul Henri Spaak, first president of the U.N. General Assembly, asked for Eleanor as his birthday present, Hiss escorted her to dinner); and of F.D.R. (Hiss is pictured seated at Roosevelt's right hand at Yalta; with Truman at the United Nations a few months later, he is on the left but once removed).

Hiss is as vivid in individuating his anonymous fellow prisoners after his fall as he is in describing the famous patrons of his young manhood. Alger Hiss had an extraordinary ability to inspire devotion from older men—the character witnesses at his first perjury trial included two Supreme Court Justices, a Secretary of State and a future Democratic presidential candidate—and this memoir shows why. The "great gentleness and sweetness of character" which Whittaker Chambers testified to is evident on every page.

And yet there is a hole at the center. "Pearl Harbor Day at the State Department," chapter eight, follows "Taking the Profits Out of War," chapter seven. The half-decade between the time Hiss left the Nye Committee, which was investigating munitions makers in the First World War, and the months preceding Pearl Harbor, are missing. Instead of the book on the 1930s and the New Deal, the book that Hiss tried for years after he left prison to write, we get this *Recollections*, from which the New Deal of the popular front has disappeared. About the years during which Hiss and Chambers knew each other, Hiss's narrative has nothing to say.

Whittaker Chambers is not the only casualty of this excision. Donald Hiss, working in one New Deal department while his brother was in another, also disappears. Priscilla Hiss (who may or may not have typed copies of confidential State Department documents on the family Woodstock) is eliminated. And although Donald appears in Hiss's prepolitical youth, Priscilla, aside from a passing reference to "my wife" as a volunteer in a New Deal agency, makes her

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first entrance at Hiss's trial and her second when she exits from his life. Priscilla Hiss was the young leftist Alger married while working for Holmes, breaking the Justice's rule that his private secretaries remain single. The *Recollections* avoid this story, and have nothing at all to say about the Hisses' marriage and life together. We learn only that they parted, amid considerable unhappiness, when Hiss wanted to dedicate himself to establishing his innocence after his release from prison and Priscilla wanted them to begin a new life in a new town under new names.

Removed with Donald and Priscilla Hiss are Lee Pressman, John Abt, Nathan Witt, Henry Collins, Nathan Ware, "old Uncle Tom Cobbly and all" the Communists and other radicals in the Hiss circle. The first three are listed together once as fellow "Young Turks" at the Agricultural Adjustment Administration and never appear again. Collins and Ware have no existence at all. Ware, a Communist, was the leader of the radical young lawyers at A.A.A. Collins, whom sources in addition to Chambers have placed in the Communist underground, was very close to the Hisses, as Priscilla testified, and she acknowledged that the Hisses saw the families of the others socially. You would think from these *Recollections*, however, that Alger Hiss had no Washington friends his own age.

And no connection to American radicalism. Hiss told Alan Weinstein (though those who think Hiss innocent may believe nothing Weinstein reports) that Abe Fortas was the only person with whom he ever talked about Communism in the 1930s. Was this Hiss's idea of a joke? He was a member of a radical legal group with Pressman in New York City in the early 1930s, his wife joined the Socialist Party (although she denied it during the Red scare) and many of their friends were close to or in the Communist Party. The Communist Party, however, is not listed in the index to this book. There is a poignant moment when Hiss describes the sight of a rose-breasted grosbeak from his prison yard. Those familiar with the Hiss case will remember that Chambers used his knowledge that Hiss had seen the very rare prothonotary warbler to prove he was more intimate with the New Deal bureaucrat than Hiss had acknowledged. But bird-watching substitutes for politics in this memoir rather than leading back to it. Just as there is more on Hiss's French summer romance than on his marriage, so he says more about the rose-breasted grosbeak than about American Communism.

The most important friend his own age missing from this *Recollections* is Whittaker Chambers. It is likely, though Hiss has denied it, that he was introduced to Chambers by John Hermann, a member with Chambers of the Communist underground. That is what Josephine Herbst, the radical writer and Hermann's wife at the time, believed. (Sympathetic to Hiss, she did not tell the F.B.I. about the meeting.) Whatever the circumstances of their first encounter, Hiss and Chambers became entwined. Chambers stayed at the Hisses' house, was given their car, presented them with a Bokhara rug (after the Hisses were to claim they'd stopped seeing him). Hiss was certainly important to Chambers, personally and politically; was Chambers important to Hiss?

Until now, Hiss has dismissed Chambers as a sponger with whom he and Priscilla finally lost patience. Repressed from the narrative of Hiss's *Recollections*, however, Chambers returns in the final chapter. In offering further evidence of his innocence, and speculating on the three characters who sent him to jail—Nixon, Hoover and Chambers—Hiss wonders if

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he befriended Chambers because the man reminded him of his dead brother, Bosley. Bosley and Chambers were romantic figures to Hiss, he says, men who had proletarianized themselves and refused the path of "respectable" success. Bosley had committed suicide several years before Chambers came on the scene, and Hiss speculates that he was allowing Chambers to take his brother's place. Hiss here comes close to Murray Kempton's idea, in what is still the most moving portrait of the Hiss-Chambers relationship: that Chambers was the inner rebellion Hiss dared not live, Hiss the accomplished exterior Chambers could not attain.

When Bosley Hiss killed himself, he was following in the footsteps of his father. "Suicide was a blow that was shameful as well as tragic for any family in those years, and mine reacted to the shame by silence," Hiss writes of his father's death, on the second page of this book. Alger was only 2, and the family kept from him and Donald for several years the truth of their father's end. One of his "most painful and indelible memories," Hiss reports, was hearing a woman refer to him and Donald as the children of a suicide. But their older brother, Bosley, failed to share their horror and disbelief; looking up the story in the morgue of the Baltimore *Sun*, he confirmed its truth.

Bosley, who repudiated silence about his father's shame, repeated it. Chambers, whose brother had also committed suicide and who often contemplated it himself, bounced back and forth between self-flagellation and accusation. Hiss, by contrast, had learned to appreciate "the solicitude of relatives and friends for my immediate family [that] was demonstrated in part by their reticence" about his father's suicide. Later, explaining why Holmes had him burn the rough drafts of the Justice's court opinions, Hiss speaks of "the private person's distaste for being pawed over, for having the shards of a daily life pounced upon as mementos." Are we meant to connect his own silence about the years when Chambers was in his life to his family's silence about his father?

Silence is no admission of guilt, of course, for Hiss's father was guilty of nothing but the inability to support his own family and that of his dead brother. Hiss may have good reasons not to reopen old wounds. But his reticence, however justified personally, has misleading political consequences. Hiss has written a memoir, not (like Chambers) a confession; evocative rather than revelatory, the *Recollections* takes the form of public reminiscence rather than private autobiography. Yet Hiss speaks in that form about his personal life and is silent, for the crucial half-decade in question, about his politics. Concealed by Hiss, or at the very least concealed from him, is the relationship of American Communism to the American left and the New Deal at home and to the Soviet Union abroad. No underground Communists, Moscow trials, Stalinist terror or Stalin-Hitler pact defile this memoir. Stalin was genial and conciliatory at Yalta, Hiss reports, and the "enigma of Stalin" that puzzled Americans was the relationship between his openness at Yalta and his reign of terror in the Soviet Union. But silence on the development of his own political ideas creates the enigma of Hiss, inspiring no confidence that what he now says about Stalin was his judgment in 1945.

Do the alternative versions of the Hiss case with which I began rearrange themselves, then, into a Hiss who is personally compelling but politically problematic? His silence about the popular front period bespeaks the political innocence that cold war liberals saw as the source of his guilt. Naïveté about Stalinist tyranny, they believed, not only led Hiss to spy for Russia but also made him a symbol of the popular front political illusions for which the cold war was the price. That is the wrong moral to draw from the Hiss case, however, for it not only blames left illusions for causing the cold war; it also slides from accusing Hiss of betraying the left to convicting him of betraying his country. And that is to commit the major political crime of the Hiss case, substituting spying (covert operations, as we would now say) for politics. Perhaps Hiss committed that crime, but its most important perpetrators were those who used the Hiss case to promote the cold war.

For cold war liberals, Hiss's concealment of popular front history is of a piece with the secret State Department documents he allegedly betrayed to the Soviet Union. Political innocence produces "treason." The documents in question, however, have been out in the open since Whittaker Chambers produced the typed pages for Hiss's lawyers and placed the microfilm in a pumpkin on his Maryland farm just before leading House Un-American Activities Committee investigators to it. And there is nothing of secret value in these "secret documents." High-level diplomatic gossip and vague

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reports about military dispositions are all that Hiss or those who framed him were able to produce. The lax State Department security procedures of the 1930s are fully justified by the triviality of this breach. The pumpkin papers are important not for their content but for their use: to equate political disagreement with espionage and heresy with conspiracy; to institute a state security apparatus for investigating the political beliefs of government employees and private citizens; to silence political dissent in government and society; to substitute national security obsessions for open debate and secrecy for politics; in short, to promote the Red scare.

The first trial of Alger Hiss took place alongside the first trial of Communist Party leaders under the Smith Act; their crime was not in passing secret documents but in conspiring to speak. Hiss's trials followed the HUAC investigation of Communist influence in the movies; the crime of the Hollywood Ten involved not secret microfilm but secret influence on film. The Rosenbergs' trial followed hard upon Hiss's conviction; their crime was giving Russia the secret of the atomic bomb. None of these defendants were guilty of the crimes for which their trials were made to stand. Instead, the crime of each merged with the crimes of all to create the Communist monster.

These courtroom dramas produced cold war America—interventionist abroad, quiescent and militarized at home. They gave us Presidents Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan, and before them the war in Vietnam. The American inquisition, to be sure, imitated the Stalinist regime abroad as well as the history of American Red scares at home. But even if Alger Hiss was caught up, in his innocence, in a popular front alliance of Communists and New Dealers, even if he passed American government documents to an anti-Fascist ally, even if he substituted covert operations for political openness in the 1930s and has buried that secret ever since, he is not guilty of betraying America to Russia and causing the cold war.

So, even if one thinks Hiss did everything Chambers said he did, it's not so easy to charge him with political guilt in the 1940s. By the same token, however, the personal attractiveness to which this memoir testifies resolves itself into something more complicated as well. *Recollections of a Life*, since it buries the 1930s and has little to say on the Red scare, is not useful about the events that have given Alger Hiss his impor-

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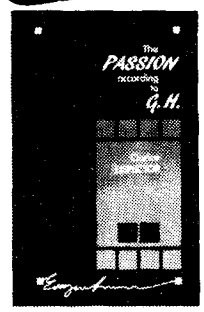

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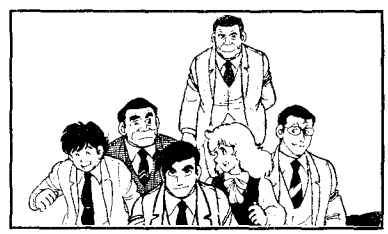

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tance in American life. It is, rather, Hiss's effort—to paraphrase Vonnegut—to free himself from the cold war allegory in which he has been imprisoned. But the political omissions cast a shadow over the personal story as well. This book comprises the recollections of a life, not the life. It is the life Hiss wished he had lived, the good life of public service cut short when Chambers returned to haunt him, followed by the life on trial, in prison and thereafter, when Hiss had to deal with the consequences of Chambers's accusations. Hiss is "really a writer," as Vonnegut says, and he tells movingly the story of this before and after life. But these *Recollections* will leave their mark as literature, not history. Alger Hiss has contributed yet another compelling literary work to the case of Alger Hiss. ☐

ART.

ARTHUR C. DANTO

Robert Mapplethorpe

"Fifteen years' worth of Robert Mapplethorpe's prints are represented in a show of nudes, portraits, and still-lifes," is how the Whitney Museum's show (through October 23 in New York City) of this dark and swanky photographer is identified in the bright idiom of *The New Yorker*'s "Goings on About Town." How nice! someone in Tarrytown or Katonah might think, having seen this artist's elegant digs written up in *House & Garden*: Let's make a day of it—shop Madison, have lunch somewhere and then see the nudes, portraits and still lifes. Just the thing! And sure enough, the first of three photographs to one's right just before entering the show is a portrait of the late Louise Nevelson. And right next to that is a nude and a portrait at once, since its title is *Carleton*. Carleton is shown from behind, his head bent away from us into the Caravaggian black of the background, thrusting his buttocks forward, which are then pulled slightly apart by his legs, which hang on either side of the table on which he is posed, leaving a triangle at their parting as the focus of the print, as black as the abstract blackness of the background. And next to this is something we soon make out to be a male nipple, a vortex in a network of pores and follicles, skin as it would have been seen by the microscopic eyes of Gulliver on the Brobdingnagian ladies who liked to dandle him. Seen close up, this erotically charged locus of human skin contrasts with the beauty of that which stretches, smoothly and warmly, over the marvelous muscles of the male nude, placed between the dead artist and the leathery button of flesh. Is *Nipple* to be classed as a nude? Or a still life? Or a synecdochical portrait of sorts (you will encounter a double image, two stages of a cock and balls, a portrait by the same criterion as *Carleton* since titled *Richard*). The question of genre will haunt the visitor as he or she works through the exhibition, since the still lifes more and more seem metaphors for displayed sexual parts, which are often the main attribute of nude and seminude portraits. But that question will soon be stifled by others more haunting still.

The three prefatory photographs are high-style, high-glamour studies, reminiscent of an Art Deco sensibility, embodying an aesthetic that Mapplethorpe attained early and steadily maintained: Some of the portraits look as though they belong in the stateroom of a suave ocean liner, in a mirrored frame, beside the chromium cocktail shaker and an artful arrangement of stark flowers of just the sort shown in Mapplethorpe's still lifes. They are elegant, luxurious, sophisticated, impeccable. But they are far more than that. The linking of death and art in the famous sepulchral head of the aged sculptor, the delibidinization of the erogenous in the magnified and distanced nipple, are held together, in one of the great moral syllogisms of our age, through the perfect male nude, viewed from the rear—from its vulnerable side—as middle term. This *memento mori* would not have been there at the beginning of Mapplethorpe's project, in which the high style of the 1930s was appropriated to register a subject matter of the 1970s, when this artist undertook to treat, from the perspective of serious art, the values and practices of the sado-masochistic subculture of homosexuals who were into bondage and domination. But it has certainly cast its retrospective shadow over this body of work since 1981, when AIDS was first announced, and the active male homosexual found to be in a population at high risk. A show of Mapplethorpe is always timely because of his rare gifts as an artist. But circumstances have made such a show timely in another dimension of moral reality, and I am grateful the organizers did not stint on the gamy images of the 1970s, for they raise some of the hard-

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est of questions, and comprise Mapplethorpe's most singular achievement.

Consider *Mark Stevens (Mr. 10½)* of 1976. Mark Stevens is shown in profile, his powerful body arched over his spectacular penis (Mr. 10½?), which he displays laid out but unengorged along the top of a linen-covered box, on which he also leans his elbow. The picture is wider than it is high, by a ratio of 5 to 4, almost forcing Mark Stevens to bend over, despite which the space is too small to contain him: He is cropped at the shoulder, so we do not see his head, as well as at the knee, and along the back of the leg and the front of the bicep. Little matter: The one anatomical feature that is shown integrally is doubtless where Mark Stevens's identity lay in 1975, and his stomach is held in to give that even greater amplitude. Mark Stevens is wearing a black leather garment, cut away to expose his buttocks and his genitals, something like the tights affected by the sports at Roissy, where "O" underwent her sweetly recounted martyrdoms. And there is a tiny tattoo on his arm, of a devil with a pitchfork and flèched tail, connoting a playful meanness. Formally, we may admire the interesting space bounded by elbow, box surface, belly and chest, a sort of display case in which Mark Stevens's sex is framed as something rare and precious. Cropping, inner and outer space, calculated shadows and controlled backlighting—these belong to the vocabulary of high photographic art, the sort that Weston lavished on peppers in the 1930s, or which Mapplethorpe himself devoted, in 1985, to an eggplant, also laid out on a table, echoing Mark Stevens's recumbent phallus. Still life and nude or seminude portrait interanimate one another, here and throughout the show, and as a photograph, the study of Mark Stevens, quite as the other studies of leather-clad gays, is of an artistic order altogether different from the images that must have found their way into magazines of that era devoted to pain, humiliation and sexual subjugation, with their advertisements of sadistic gear—whips and chains and shackles, hoods and leather wear (the he-man's equivalent to sexy lingerie) and the pathetic promises of ointments and exercises designed and guaranteed to increase length, diameter and staying power.

Nor are these photographs really in the spirit of documentation, recording a form of life, though in fact and secondarily they provide such a record. They are, rather, celebratory of their subjects,

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acts of artistic will driven by moral beliefs and attitudes. Mapplethorpe is not there like a disinterested, registering eye. He was a participant and a believer. In exactly the same way, Mark Stevens was not a subject but a kind of collaborator: He agreed to display himself, he chose to dress himself in those symbolic vestments, to take and hold that pose. We see him no doubt as he would have wanted to be seen, as Mr. 10½, but as he knew he would be seen by someone he could trust, because the photographer would show their form of life from within. We see him, indeed, from within a homosexual perception, and it is that perception, that vision, that is the true subject of these works. They are not just of gays at a certain moment in gay history, when it all at once seemed possible for this to become the substance of serious art. The images are flooded with a way of seeing the world, given embodiment, made objective, in a suite of stunning photographs.

Analogously to the way in which Mark Stevens's phallus is made focal by the proportions of the photograph, by the cropped figure and the interior space, so, I think, is the phallus as such made focal in the exhibition taken as a whole, and I applaud the curatorial intuition that went into the selection and installation that makes this true. Richard Howard, in an inspired catalogue essay, credits Mapplethorpe with having aestheticized the genitals, drawing attention to the correspondence in form and function between these and flowers, which are "the sexual organs of plants." Howard is doubtless correct, but then, it seems to me, immensity must play an important role in this aestheticizing, and hence in the vision from within which the (male) genitals are perceived as beautiful. And this is disappointingly as reductive and mechanistic an attitude as that which thematizes big breasts in women. In *Man in Polyester Suit* of 1980, the subject, in his three-piecer, again cropped at shoulder and knee, has an open fly through which an elephantine phallus hangs heavily down, shaped like a fat integral sign, a thick S of flesh. In *Thomas*, a black male presses like Samson against the sides of a square space that walls him in, and his genitals hang like fruit between his spread legs—like the contextually phallicized bunch of grapes hanging from a string in a picture of 1985. But all the nudes are, as the expression goes, well hung, and one wonders if Mapplethorpe's aestheticizing project would have allowed another choice.

In a famous episode in *A Moveable Feast*, F. Scott Fitzgerald expresses concern about the size of his penis, Zelda having said it was inadequately small; and Hemingway suggests he compare himself with what is to be found on classical statues, saying that most men would be satisfied with that. In my nearly four years as a soldier, I would have noticed it if anyone was equipped like the Man in Polyester Suit, or Mark Stevens for that matter. Robert Burns, in one of his nastier verses, wrote "Nine inches doth please a lady"—but something of that dimension would have been negligible in the baths and washrooms of the 1970s if Mapplethorpe's models are typical. On the other hand, there is a wonderful portrait of Louise Bourgeois, wearing an improbably shaggy coat and grinning knowingly out at the viewer, as if to connect her, us, the artist, and his megaphallolatry in a piece of comedy—for she carries under her arm a sculpture, I dare say hers, of a really huge phallus and balls (Mr. 36½), putting things in perspective. I was grateful to the wise old sculptor for reminding us that the huge phallus was regarded as comical in the ancient world, and there are wonderful images on the sides of Grecian vases of actors wearing falsies to crack them up at Epidaurus. Even so, phallic references define this show (study the relationship between breasts, neck and head in the uncharacteristic portrait of Lisa Lyon, usually seen, as in a book of Mapplethorpe's photographs of her, engaged in body-building).

What is interesting is less the phallocentrism of Mapplethorpe's aesthetic than the politicizing of that aesthetic, preeminently in the images from the late 1970s, to which the portrait of Mark Stevens belongs. That was a period in which gays were coming out of the closet in large numbers, defiantly and even proudly, and were actively campaigning not only to change social attitudes toward themselves but to build their own culture. It seems clear to me that these photographs were political acts, and that they would not have been made as art were it not the intention to enlist art in some more critical transformation. I am insufficiently a historian of that movement, but my hunch is that sadomasochism must have presented some of the same sorts of dilemmas for the gay liberation movement that lesbianism initially did for the women's liberation movement. So this is not, as it were, "The Joy of S&M," but an artistic form of a moral claim on behalf of practices other gays might have found difficult to accept. Even today, it is difficult for his most avid enthusiasts to accept the 1978 self-portrait through which Mapplethorpe declares his solidarity with Mark Stevens; with the scary couple, Brian Ridley and Lyle Heeter, leather boys in their sexual uniforms, Brian seated, shackled, in a wing chair while Lyle stands possessively over his shoulder, wearing his sullen master's cap, holding Brian's chains with one hand and a fierce crop with the other; or with Joe, encased in leather from crown to sole, creeping along a bench, with some sort of tube whose function I cannot even imagine strapped to his mask. Mapplethorpe shows himself from behind. He is dressed in a sort of jerkin, and in those backless tights worn by Mark Stevens. He is looking over his shoulder at us, his Pan-like head with its small soft beard glowering a sort of defiance. He is holding the handle of a cruel bullwhip up his anus. The visual equation between the phallus and the agency of pain contributes another component to genital aesthetics.

It is possible to appreciate this self-portrait formalistically and draw attention, like a docent, to shadows of graded intensity, for the subtle play of values. In the same way it would be possible to connect Mapplethorpe's own features with the little Pan's head in *Pan Head and Flower*—and the flower itself, its pistil hanging out of the petal, with the penis in *Man in Polyester Suit*. Anything that is art can be seen that way. You can pay particular heed to the play of hues and the strong diagonals in Titian's *The Flaying of Marsyas*, which so unsettled us all when it hung in the National Gallery not long ago. But I do not know what sort of person it would be who could look past the blood dripping into a pool from which an indifferent dog laps, or the exposed and quivering flesh, the hanging skin, the absolute agony of the satyr hung by his heels while Apollo carves away, to dwell on niceties of composition. A photograph such as Mapplethorpe's self-portrait cannot have been made or exhibited for our aesthetic delectation alone but rather to engage us morally and aesthetically. It would be known in advance that such an image would challenge, assault, insult, pro-

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voke, dismay—with the hope that in some way consciousness would be transformed. Its acceptance as art cannot be the only kind of acceptance in issue. It would have to be a pretty cool cat for whom the triptych *Jim and Tom, Sausalito* of 1978, which shows, in each of its panels, what looks like Jim pissing into Tom's eager mouth, recommends itself as a particularly good example of what gelantine silver prints look like.

A pretty rough show, then, for someone who came to see nudes, portraits and still lifes. It is made rougher still by the inescapable dates on the labels of the stronger images, all of which come from that hopeful ignorant time when it seemed that all that was involved was a kind of liberation of attitude concerning practices between consenting adults in a society of sexual pluralism. Of course the show has its tenderer moments. There are prints of overwhelming tenderness of Mapplethorpe's great friend, Patti Smith. There is a lovely picture of Brice Marden's little girl. It is possible to be moved by a self-portrait of 1980, in which Mapplethorpe shows himself in women's make-up, eager and girlish and almost pubescent in the frail flatness of his/her naked upper body. There is a certain amount of avant-garde scrimshaw in the show, experiments with shaped frames, with mats and mirrors; and then finally there are a certain number of just elegant portraits, nudes and still lifes. But the self-portrait as young girl remains in my mind as the emblem of the exhibition, and for the dark reality that has settled upon the world to which it belongs. One cannot but think back to Marcel Duchamp's self-representation in *maquillage*, wearing the sort of wide-brimmed hat Virginia Woolf might have worn with a hatband designed by Vanessa, with ringed fingers and a fur boa. Duchamp even took on a feminine alias, Rrose Sélavy. ("Eros c'est la vie.") Nor can one help but feel saddened that Rrose Sélavy has lost her enduring innocence and changed her name to Rrose Sélamort.

The *Harper's Index* recently juxtaposed the number of deaths due to AIDS with the number due to measles. The former is insignificantly small by comparison with the latter, but numbers have little to do with it, at least not yet. With AIDS a form of life went dead, a way of thought, a form of imagination and hope. Any death is tragic and the death of children especially so, thinking of measles now primarily as a childhood death. The statistics are doubly sad since means for prevention and treatment are available, so the deaths by measles index an economic tragedy as well. But this other death carries away a whole possible world. The afternoon I visited the Mapplethorpe exhibition, I was impressed by my fellow visitors. They were subdued and almost, I felt, stunned. There were no giggles, scarcely any whispers. It was as though everyone felt the moral weight of the issues. And one felt an almost palpable resistance to face the thoughts the show generated, which each visitor had to overcome. It is not an easy experience, but it is a crucial one. Art is more than just art, and the Whitney took on a higher responsibility in supporting this exhibition.

Look at the enigmatic self-portrait of 1986, to your right as you exit the show. It is at right angles to the triad of photographs before which we paused while about to enter the room, and whose meaning is deepened by what we have seen and thought. Here the artist is dressed in a formal way, with wing collar and butterfly bow. With his long sideburns and taut neck muscles, he looks like a tense dandy. His head is turned slightly up and to the left, and the face he shows us wears a serious,

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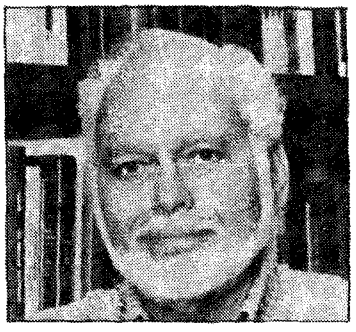

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questioning look. I expect mine did as well. So, by rights, should yours. □

FILMS.

STUART KLAWANS

Crossing Delancey
Tucker

In *Crossing Delancey*, a modest and pleasant comedy directed by Joan Micklin Silver, Peter Riegert falls for Amy Irving because she's so good-looking, and she eventually returns his affections because he's a nice guy. One may thus say with mathematical precision that the story is halfway plausible.

Irving plays an unmarried, thirtyish bookstore employee named Isabelle, who lives uptown in Manhattan and runs her love life on automatic pilot. Her former boyfriend, played by the gigantesque John Bedford Lloyd, continues to show up at her apartment at will, mostly unannounced and late at night. Her future boyfriend, as she sees it, is an émigré novelist much in fashion at her bookstore. As portrayed by Jeroen Krabbé, this man combines the literary flair of Jerzy Kozinski with the worldly charm of Bruce Willis, or maybe vice versa. He seems an ideal package to Isabelle, at any rate. She is therefore doubly horrified when her beloved Jewish grandmother on the Lower East Side interferes by forcing her to meet a bachelor selected by a professional matchmaker, and she is triply horrified when the man turns out to be a pickle merchant. A *plain-faced* pickle merchant. A plain-faced pickle merchant who regularly attends a *synagogue.*

Up to this point, the film is shaky. The script, by Susan Sandler, began its life as a stage play, and in the early scenes it betrays its origins with a static exposition and, worse, a monologue in which Isabelle explains herself. This is the kind of Act I machinery that I go to movies to avoid. Irving only underscores the problem, reeling off her tirade as if she'd just gone off book; and, as the matchmaker, Sylvia Miles turns in the sort of over-the-top performance that works best if you're in the last row of the Uris Theatre or among the audience at a John Waters film. Yet just as I was about to lose heart, Peter Riegert showed up as the pickle man, and *Crossing Delancey* turned into a movie.

Riegert has been given a blessedly unstereotyped role: a man who clearly has options other than the family business on the Lower East Side, but who has made the decision to stay put. There are no cheap tricks written into the film to make him more attractive—no streak of proletarian earthiness, no talent for wisecracks. He has nothing going for him except kindness, quiet humor and a natural dignity. Riegert, through some alchemy too subtle for the eye, makes this man become real, and from then on *Crossing Delancey* offers an uninterrupted string of small pleasures.

Not the least of these is an attention to the city's details. The film is full of street peddlers, street singers, Korean salad bars, performance artists on public-access TV and—of course—terrifying cab drivers from Third World countries. In general, the homelier details are the more convincing. The soirées at Isabelle's bookstore are Disneyland simulations of literary life, but the film's Lower East Side is for real, right down to the old signboard outside Riegert's store announcing, "A joke and a pickle for only a nickel."

Standing confidently between the film's plausible and implausible sides is Reizl Bozyk as Isabelle's gap-toothed grandmother. In a performance fully as remarkable as Riegert's, she satisfies the film's insatiable appetite for Yiddish shtick while providing human substance to her character. It's quite a balancing act, and Bozyk seems to have had a ball with it.

Tucker: The Man and His Dream, directed by Francis Ford Coppola, poses a problem in imitative form. The story is based on the life of an automotive entrepreneur who started with a bang, got entangled in legal problems and business intrigues, and ultimately lost his company. Just so, the film begins with wonderful energy and then turns darker and more obsessive as it goes along, until it has the air of a late-night TV pitchman for real-estate seminars, insisting through a strained smile that you *can* make it.

And yet there's the opening, which is good enough to remind you of the Francis Ford Coppola everybody loves. It begins not as a 1988 Paramount Pictures megaproduction but as a 1948 promotional piece for the Tucker Corporation, complete with bad color and kitschy music. When Coppola cuts away from this frame in order to begin the story proper, he has the nerve to be *more* hokey than the publicity film. As Tucker, Jeff Bridges roars into the driveway of his home and workshop in Ypsilanti, Michigan, into a scene crammed with children, factory assistants, a bustling maid, a smiling wife—and then releases from his car a dozen trained dogs. "You want the whole Capra movie, with the pretty house and the pretty family and the faithful pooch?" Coppola seems to be saying. "I'll give you *twelve* dogs—Dalmatians!"

Hardly have the animals escaped into the yard than Tucker is announcing his grand idea to build the car of the future. He has no start-up capital, no factory, no distribution system, and—a minor impediment—he doesn't actually know anything about automotive engineering. But he has some drawings of a car and figures he can get them printed in a magazine, thereby *convincing* everybody that the car is for real. Having created the demand, he then can build something more or less like the car he promised. When his wife (Joan Allen) mentions that this seems a bit deceptive, Tucker brushes away her objections. "If you're selling candy," he says, "what do you advertise, 'It rots your teeth out'?"

As it happens, Tucker's first name was Preston; so it may be more than coincidence that the beginning of *Tucker* feels less like Capra than like a Preston Sturges film, with its furious speed, its fascination with public relations, its main character who is so cheerfully, optimistically cynical that he cannot even recognize his cynicism. When Martin Landau appears as Tucker's financial adviser, a shuffling, shrugging caricature of a New York Jew, the resemblance becomes almost uncanny—he's like a character actor straight out of Sturges's old stock company at Paramount.

And then, huffing and puffing, the film begins to labor its way through the flatlands of the plot. Suffice it to say that the Big Three automakers don't like Tucker, and neither does their pet U.S. Senator. As the conspiracy begins to close around Tucker, Coppola makes the mistake that Sturges would have avoided: He begins to take the man seriously. The twelve Dalmatians go for naught—*Tucker* becomes a Capra film in earnest. □

EXCHANGE.

(*Continued From Page 222*)

Lund's article suggests the opposite.

The article is sprinkled with statistics of a misleading or erroneous nature and it is frankly too tedious to expect the reader to plow through a point by point refutation. There is one, however, which illustrates the danger of secondhand reporting. Bollinger

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quotes, from the university-sponsored surveys of which he so much approves, that "The United States . . . was named by 79 percent of Salvadorans and 61 percent of Costa Ricans as a country that most meddles in the internal affairs of Central America." The Costa Ricans and Salvadorans were really answering a question most accurately translated as "the country outside Central America which most influences the affairs of Central America." Bollinger and Lund represent this as referring to "meddling." Whether the United States meddles in Central America or not is a question, but the Central Americans were not asked about it.

Bollinger and Lund's glowing description of the university-sponsored polling in Central America conducted by Ignacio Martín-Baró is revealing. This latter gentleman "was convinced that honest, scientific public opinion surveys were possible in El Salvador." Sure they are. Denton's CID is carrying them out. But the sentence implies a distant goal, possibly attainable by this outfit. Their interviewers are male university students, who are not looked upon as particularly reliable employees in this field in most countries unless proof to the contrary is available, and the method of interview used in Central America suggests that they do not collect traceable names and addresses. This is related to the idea of people's fear that they might be called to account.

This also means that the results could be uncheckable. CID poll procedures are such that the interviews are checked, up to 30 percent of all respondents. So whereas we know that the information obtained by CID in Central America is capable of being validated, we do not know that the University Institute of Public Opinion (IUDOP) polls are. So it is impossible to attach much credence to the results they obtained.

Finally, I come to what is clearly a major subject of concern in the United States, namely, what it is doing in Central America. I see running through Bollinger and Lund's article a deep dissatisfaction with what the Administration is doing and a sense of frustration at not being able to get at the facts. This leads them to supply their own "facts," which are a mixture of secondary reporting and rumor for the most part. Now this is an essentially U.S. problem. Carlos Denton, running CID out of Costa Rica, and fully accredited by Gallup International, has done his professional job well, and cannot be held responsible for what happens in Washington or the U.S. media. Bollinger and Lund could avail themselves of the Freedom of Information Act, get at the facts and make a contribution to this essentially internal U.S. dispute. I know Bollinger has invoked this right and has in hand all relevant U.S.I.A. research reports on public opinion in Central America, though his article doesn't show it.

It is certainly not for me as a British citizen to intervene in the politics of your country. All I can say is that, first, Gallup in America cannot be tarnished by the innuendos in *The Nation* and, second, that the work of CID in Costa Rica is honest and valid, and the rest is an internal fight among your citizens.

Norman L. Webb
Secretary General
Gallup International

BOLLINGER AND LUND REPLY

Los Angeles

We appreciate U.S Gallup's disavowal of responsibility for the work of its Central America affiliate and its regret for the manner in which the Reagan Administration has "played up the Gallup connection." But Andrew Kohut may have misread the thrust of our article if he thinks we were duped into believing that the U.S.I.A.-commissioned surveys are "Gallup polls." We reported that the Gallup name and prestige have been exploited, with little or no visible objection from Princeton or GIRI's London headquarters, in order to pressure the U.S. Congress on the *contra* aid issue. It is the public, both in Central America and the United States, that has been deceived, not us. Furthermore, we doubt that Gallup in Princeton, as GIRI's founder and most influential member, is as powerless to remedy the situation as Kohut implies. More likely, what we have is complacency. Gallup limited itself to examining the label which CID/Gallup puts on its reports. Polling and research disclosure practices that would be intolerable in the United States are apparently regarded as acceptable in El Salvador. We stand by our criticism of the manner in which the Gallup name has been "franchised" to commercial firms operating in undemocratic Third World nations, in apparent disregard of the democratic philosophy of George Gallup Sr.

The Gallup Organization's nonendorsement of its Central America affiliate contrasts markedly with the spirited defense of both the U.S.I.A. and CID/Gallup by GIRI head Norman Webb. His testimonials for these two organizations indicate that he cannot consider the possibility that the U.S.I.A. might craft its Central America questionnaires with an eye to propaganda use or that CID/Gallup's Charles Denton might lend himself to such an enterprise.

Webb says neither GIRI nor CID/Gallup can be "held responsible for what happens in Washington or the American media." This cavalier attitude toward the polling profession's ethical principles is part of the problem in Central America. Gallup in Princeton reiterates its commitment to the standards of disclosure and professional ethics of such associations as A.A.P.O.R. and N.C.P.P., but Webb disavows any such responsibility for Denton (or, we presume, any of GIRI's Third World affiliates). The overriding concern in Webb's mind is CID/Gallup's loyalty to its U.S. government client, and he heartily endorses Denton's hiding behind the "proprietary and classified nature of the U.S.I.A. data."

The A.A.P.O.R. and N.C.P.P. ethical

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codes state that when poll results are released or leaked to the public, the confidentiality required by research contracts is lifted. The polling firm does not wait to comply with the principles of disclosure until, as Webb implies, there is "mutual agreement" with the sponsor. By then, the U.S.I.A. or President Reagan have already had a field day in gaining media coverage of their version of the polls, as happened in 1986. Once public use of the polls has begun, the research firm must make available to the public certain essential information, including exact wording of questions, rates of refusal to be interviewed (an important barometer of fear in Central America) and other vital data on factors that could affect responses to questions. This disclosure is a professional obligation, not an option. Furthermore, whenever there are serious public distortions of the research (as we show have occurred in Central America and the United States with CID/Gallup polls), the polling firm is required to correct the public record by making statements to the public media, legislative bodies, regulatory agencies or other appropriate groups affected by the distortions. We know of no case in which Denton has ever complied in El Salvador or the United States. If he doesn't want to be responsible for distorted use of his polls in El Salvador, he should not poll there. If he doesn't want to be accountable in the United States, he should not have the U.S. government as his most important political polling client.

Webb's avoidance of responsibility on the ethical issues is eloquent. His attempt to protect CID/Gallup's reputation by attacking the work of university-based pollsters is equally revealing. Let us look at his three

Webb criticizes Ignacio Martín-Baró's IUDOP for not taking down Salvadoran respondent names and addresses so that they can be reinterviewed later. He is unimpressed with the argument that, to obtain quality interviews in El Salvador, respondents must be guaranteed complete anonymity. Indeed, Webb shows no concern at all for the problem of how to obtain candid expressions of political views in El Salvador. One of IUDOP's virtues is that it gives great attention to this problem and makes its methods and refusal rates public. The U.S.I.A. insists on reinterviewing because the agency knows CID/Gallup interviewers might be tempted to fake the questionnaires. IUDOP has a completely different approach to counter this possibility. We don't know the quality of CID/Gallup interviews in El Salvador, and Webb's remarks are not reassuring.

Webb's apology for CID/Gallup's inability to predict the resounding Arena victory in El Salvador's March municipal and National Assembly elections rests on a most unlikely premise. Webb believes José Napoleón Duarte's Christian Democrats held a commanding lead in party preference six months earlier, and that Arena narrowed the gap and finally shot ahead in the last days before the election. This theory allows him to dismiss a series of IUDOP polls that showed Arena leading the Christian Democrats as far back as June 1987. Furthermore, Webb is not disturbed by the fact that CID/Gallup polls showed high Salvadoran rates of party identification or even "affiliation," whereas IUDOP surveys showed very low rates of party preference. IUDOP correctly predicted the actual vote and the high rate of abstentionism, published its data and conclusions before the election and took the political heat from the Duarte regime. CID/Gallup produced questionable poll results, sat back while the Christian Democrats distorted them in the media and to this date has not issued a correction of the public record, according to scholars in El Salvador.

Webb's sole example of his charge that we sprinkled our article with misleading statistics concerns Central American resentment over U.S. "meddling" in their countries' internal affairs. Here Webb seems to have bought the absurd U.S.I.A. line, put forward in his presence by William Millard at the May A.A.P.O.R. meeting in Toronto, that Central Americans view U.S. intervention as positive. According to Millard, this is due to the Latin American tradition of deferring to the authority of the *patrón*. Central Americans seek U.S. intervention in their nations' internal affairs much as they pray for God's intervention to relieve their suffering. With Millard's guidance, Webb says that Central American identification of the United States as "influencing" or "intervening" in their internal affairs carries no negative connotations. We stand by our general characterization that these responses reflect dislike of U.S. "meddling."

Furthermore, Webb is incorrect that we cannot know what people really think about meddling because no one has ever asked them. In a national random survey of 1,080 adults in September 1987, IUDOP asked Salvadorans, "In your opinion, which country most intervenes in the internal affairs of Central America?" The results were consistent with those we reported in our article from the latter capital city surveys. By an overwhelming margin of 70 percent, people said the United States most intervenes, with only small numbers complaining about Nicaragua, Cuba or the Soviet Union.

Finally, Webb implies that we have no need to hold CID/Gallup accountable because the U.S.I.A. has already delivered to us all the information we need under our F.O.I.A. request. Not true. The U.S.I.A. has released only a small fraction of the data we requested. In particular, we have received almost nothing that would allow us to evaluate CID/Gallup's polling methods, consistency of responses and quality of interviews. The U.S.I.A. has also withheld all documents concerning the purposes and political uses of the surveys. We will be happy to apply our academic training to the study of these original sources as soon as the U.S.I.A., GIRI or CID/Gallup releases them.

William Bollinger
Daniel M. Lund

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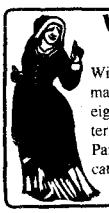

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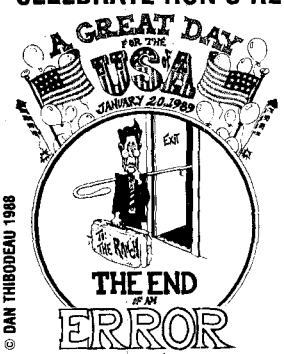

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X-523

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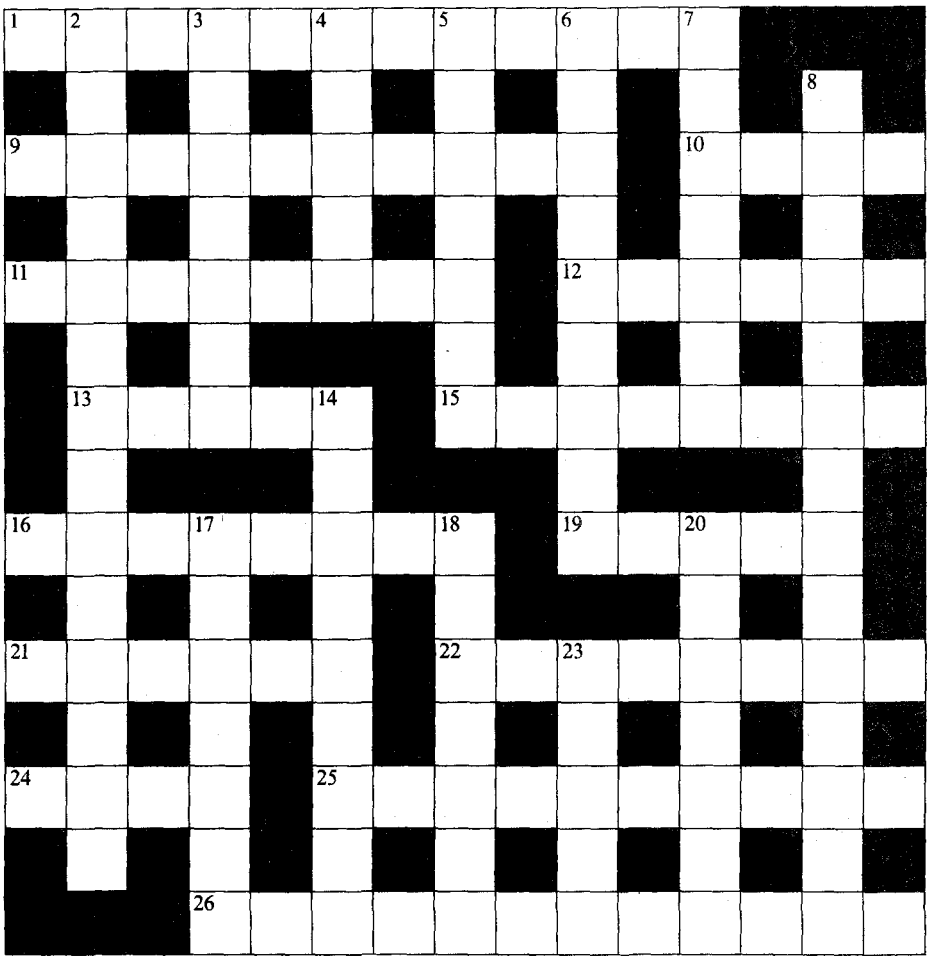

ACROSS

1 Perfectly harmless fireworks? Any eggs without an answer? (4-8)
9 The law is the true one of everything that's excellent, according to the Lord Chancellor. (10)
10 A Burma girl kissed one's feet, in Kipling's *Mandalay*. (4)
11 Is gain in this wrong? It might show a rank distinction! (8)
12 The little wagon goes from point to point in the game. (6)
13 Sort of got an Eastern way to travel in the islands, perhaps. (5)
15 An admonition to do what the billboards want you to do? (4,4)
16 What a bass solo has, though it's not in the right place for a strike to be called. (3,5)
19 Crawled like an Australian, perhaps, to one that might be a religious teacher. (5)
21 Like the first person, mad about the spook house? No, you've got it backwards—and the other way around! (6)
22 Self-proclaimed authority—or just completely powerless? (8)
24 It might be good or bad, but it's a circle holding only males. (4)
25 There's no flying at the top of the pole when so positioned, with no time to be happy! (2,4,4)
26 One might be concerned with the way children have a bite at times. (12)

DOWN

2 Things might be brought from here to fire. (A typical example might be considered round.) (10,4)
3 Love, as some say, takes on after one which might prove wearing. (7)
4 Does it take a ruler to do it? (One hears water coming down!) (5)
5 This may be the one that is expected to get shot, if you are following the game. (Hint: A formal dance.) (3,4)
6 Where the Frenchman hopes nothing comes, if we are close? Or is it just the way we keep a secret there? (5,4)
7 There's a sticker in which might be change for cash here—and the green stuff also. (7)
8 Their specialty might have a twist to it, being against a legally wrongful act, with what is charged to those who follow something religiously. (14)
14 The sailor who lives upstairs, as some delicate wit implies. (5,4)
17 You might find me surrounded by the horsey type, but perhaps in what might have quite a lot of taste. (7)
18 A melancholy expression, suggesting the starting out of a small mining company. (5-2)
20 Try to get at a sadly remembered offensive where those who keep order in the army were contained. (7)
23 An oil mixture in the flower of Italy, which could shortly be real trouble. (5)

SEE LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION AT LEFT

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Let's End the Isolation of the Secular Left from the Religious Left

Few on the secular Left understand the social dimensions of the Gospel, and the way the Catholic bishops, in their recent pastoral letters, placed economic democracy on the national agenda and nuclear disarmament on the nation's conscience. Few have paid much attention to the progressive social witness of Protestants. Few know what Christian activists are doing in Latin America, South Africa, South Korea, and in the ghettoes and barrios of our land. Few realize that the papacy has called for workers' ownership and self-management and that its economic views have acutely irritated apologists for big business. Few have considered the role of believers in the opposition to nuclear weapons and U.S. belligerence in Central America, and in the pro-democratic dissident movements in the East bloc.

We at the NEW OXFORD REVIEW — an ecumenical monthly edited by lay Catholics, and written and read not only by Catholics, but by Protestants, Jews, Eastern Orthodox, and even nonbelievers — believe it's time for progressives of all persuasions to inquire into the sources of resilience, energy, and social passion found among religious progressives. We are particularly interested in exploring religious commitments that yield humane social consequences, as exemplified by such giants as St. Francis, Gandhi, Bonhoeffer, Barth, Tawney, Schumacher, Mounier, Buber, Tolstoy, Merton, Dorothy Day, Archbishop Tutu, Lech Walesa, Martin Luther King Jr., Simone Weil, and Archbishop Romero.

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Those who write for us — pathfinders who straddle the fence between the "secular" and "religious" worlds — include such diverse beacons as Christopher Lasch, Walker Percy, Robert N. Bellah, John Lukacs, Henri J.M. Nouwen, Jean Bethke Elshtain, Robert Coles, Michael Lerner, and J.M. Cameron. We bat around a wide variety of issues and defy easy pigeonholing. *Newsweek* has called us "thoughtful and often cheeky," the University of Chicago's Martin E. Marty finds us "lively," and the *Library Journal* has predicted we will "doubtless command increasing attention." If you think it's time to end the isolation of the secular Left from the religious Left, and vice versa, subscribe today!

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